

You be the Moon, I'll be the Earth (and when we burst start over)

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by [PrettyLittlePoutyMouth](#)

Summary

After Tori asks Jade for a favor, Jade discovers there's more to Tori than she ever expected. Tori worries that her secret is the only thing Jade finds interesting about her. Lunacy ensues.

Notes

Thanks to gayerfurtherfaster for beta-ing.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Phases

All things considered, the break-up is pretty simple.

It's about a month and a half after she and Beck got back together...for the last time, now, she is sure. But this time, something is different. They are spending all their time together, but something's missing.

It isn't until one evening, when they are watching TV in Beck's trailer, and Beck nonchalantly says, "You know, we never have sex anymore," that she even realizes what it is.

She feels her hackles rise, and hunches her shoulders defensively. His arm is still around her shoulders, and doesn't move. "So?" she asks.

He shrugs, "Well, do you want to?"

"No," she spits.

"Okay," he says simply, and they continue watching TV. For the rest of the evening, Jade wonders why the question bothered her so much.

Over the next week or so, Jade tries to remember how many times they've even kissed. Since they'd gotten back together, and very publicly kissed onstage, she isn't sure they've kissed more than a dozen times. Still, they hang out every day. They cuddle on Beck's couch. They watch movies together, laugh at the same parts. At school every day, they exchange all the same looks about all the same people they both dislike (well, really only Trina now, as Beck seems to have decided he actually likes Sinjin since they went to the drag race together).

And one evening, after thinking about it all day, Jade turns to Beck on the couch and gently turns his face toward hers, and kisses him.

After only a moment, Beck pulls back, his eyes darting away awkwardly.

Jade stares, feeling hurt but relieved.

"This isn't working, is it?" Beck asks quietly.

Jade exhales, "I guess not," she says.

He sighs, too, in relief. "I thought it was just me. That I was the only one who felt different." Jade doesn't say anything. Even though she agrees, it isn't easy to talk about. Something is happening. A change is happening between them. Beck continues, "Ever since we got back together, it didn't feel the same to me. It just felt like we were allowing ourselves to be friends again. Not like a relationship."

"Yeah," Jade agrees. That part is easy enough to agree with.

"And...if neither of us even feels like being physical...what's the point of being in a sexual relationship? This is just a friendship, isn't it?"

“Yeah,” Jade agrees again.

“Okay,” Beck nods, taking everything in stride, as usual. “I’m just happy we’re friends again. That’s really what I missed most about you.”

Jade stands up. “Me, too.” She gathers her bag, “But I need some time to...process this.”

Beck looks confused, “What is there to process? Nothing has changed, except we’ve admitted that we’re really just better off as friends. I mean, since we got back together, this has barely qualified as a relationship.”

“I don’t disagree,” Jade mutters, “But just give me a week to figure out what this means.”

“Okay,” Beck says, a touch of sadness in his voice, “Just let me know if I can help.”

“You can help by giving me a little space,” Jade growls.

“Okay,” he concedes, holding his hands up. “See you at school tomorrow.”

“Yeah. See ya.”

The news spreads fast. When Jade gets home, Beck has already changed their Slap status, and it seems like everybody notices. Plenty of people comment to ask what happened, but neither of them say anything. Jade gets texts from Cat and Tori asking if she is okay, and she just tells them yes and to butt out of her business.

Still, it changes things. A part of her always felt connected to Beck, even when they had been broken up before, because their reunion had always felt so inevitable. If they aren’t a couple, what is she? Who is she?

Even after everything that has happened between them, Jade still likes to pretend that she and Tori aren’t friends.

Which is why when, a few days later, Tori asks her for a ride somewhere, Jade just says, “No,” and walks away.

Before she can get far, Tori grabs her arm, “Come on. Please?”

It’s exactly the reaction Jade wants to provoke. She smirks a little. “I’ll think about it. What’s in it for me?”

Tori spreads her hands, “What do you want?”

“I don’t know yet. Where do you need a ride to, anyway?”

Tori looks away and feigns nonchalance, “Oh, just to Shadow Creek Park.”

“What?” Jade asks, frowning, “When?”

“Tonight,” Tori continues in the same tone.

“Is this a joke?”

“Nope. Now will you help me?”

Jade nods slowly, “Okay. I have my price now. You tell me what you’re doing in Shadow Creek Park tonight, and I’ll give you a ride.”

Tori groans, “I *can’t*.”

Jade turns to walk away again, “Then I guess you’re walking.”

Tori makes a frustrated noise, “I literally *can’t* tell you!” she cries.

“Come on. If it’s a body, I’ll help you bury it,” Jade teases.

“*Fine!*” Tori sighs, and lowers her voice considerably, “I have a *date*.”

Despite herself, Jade laughs. Just once, though, before she controls herself, “A date. In Shadow Creek Park. At night.”

Tori folds her arms. “*Yes*.”

Jade stares at her for a long moment, then smiles, “There, was that so hard?”

“So you’ll give me a ride?”

“It’s after dark, right?”

Tori looks uncomfortable, “It’s sort of...just before dark. But it’ll be dark for your whole drive home!”

Jade scowls, but considers. She isn’t spending the evening with Beck, and she doesn’t particularly want to hang out with Cat. Frankly, spending part of the evening with Tori doesn’t sound that bad. She’d gone over to Tori’s before rather than going to the races with Beck, and they do tend to have a good time together. Not that they’d be doing much together. But it would be a drive. Something to do. Time to think. Or a distraction. She isn’t sure which she needs more. “Fine,” she finally agrees.

“*Thank you*,” Tori gasps, impulsively hugging her.

Jade lets her, for a moment, before pulling away. “I have to get to Sikowitz’s.”

“Yeah, me, too?” Tori says, sounding worried for Jade’s sanity.

“Really? I had no idea,” Jade calls over her shoulder as she strides away, staying just steps ahead of Tori so that they are decidedly *not* walking to class together.

The sun is low in the sky when Jade drives over to pick up Tori. Tori bounds out of the house, wearing jeans, a t-shirt, a hoodie, and, strangest of all, her glasses. She isn’t even carrying her monstrous purse. Jade can’t help but wonder what kind of date this is.

“Thank you for driving me,” Tori says as she slides into the passenger seat.

“Thank me when we get there alive,” Jade answers darkly. She pulls out of Tori’s driveway and curses, slapping her visor down, “This is the *worst* time of day to drive. I *hate* it when the sun is this low!”

“I’m sorry,” Tori sighs.

“Stop apologizing,” Jade snaps, “I agreed to drive you.”

There’s a tense silence for awhile, as Jade fumes at the sun, and moves her mirrors and visors to deal with it as she drives. Tori just sits, her leg bouncing nervously, as Jade drives.

Eventually, the bouncing gets to Jade. “Date jitters?” she asks pointedly.

Tori rests her hand on her knee, seeming like she has to force it to be still. “No,” she answers defensively.

Jade smirks, “Sure.”

“I’m *not* nervous,” Tori insists.

“If you say so,” Jade shrugs. Tori groans and folds her arms, staring out the window, but at least her leg stops bouncing.

As they pull up to Shadow Creek Park, it’s sunset, and the sky is awash with radiant pinks and reds. Tori leaps out almost before the car has even stopped. She pokes her head back in and quickly shouts, “Thanks for the ride!” and slams the door.

“Wait a minute!” Jade calls, rolling down the car window, “Are you sure you just want me to leave you here? I don’t see anyone else...”

“Don’t worry, I’ll be fine!” Tori calls back. “And I have a ride home, so you’re free to leave!”

“Okay,” Jade says uncertainly, “Because if your date doesn’t show, I’m not about to come back and get you!”

“I’m *fine*,” Tori insists, “ Thanks, Jade! Bye!”

With the parting words, “If I don’t see you for a week, I’ll come back here and find your corpse!” Jade drives off. She sees Tori, in her rearview mirror, jogging deeper into the weird park. The sun is steadily setting. By the time Jade gets home, it’s dark.

She isn’t sure what she should do with the rest of her evening. She has a vague idea for a story in the back of her mind that she doesn’t know what to do with yet—is it a film? A play? She tries to flesh out the idea, but it’s hard, because she keeps thinking about Tori, at Shadow Creek Park at night. Who is she meeting?

Around eleven, she’s starting to get tired, and she decides to go to bed. But she sends a text to Tori first.

**Just making sure you don't need
a ride because I'm still not going to
give it to you**

There's no immediate answer, which she has to admit does...distract her a little, but not enough to keep her from sleep.

When her alarm goes off in the morning, Jade grabs her phone, immediately eager to see if Tori replied. And she has, at about 5am.

**Sorry! I was asleep and just got this.
I'm fine! I got a ride home. But it was
sweet of you to worry.**

Jade scowls.

I was **not worried. Just glad I
don't have to come find your body.**

Tori doesn't respond, which is just as well. Jade checks The Slap over her first cup of coffee, which is pretty uninteresting, except for Tori's update, at 6am.

Tori Vega:

Had a great night! So much fun...

Feeling: Fluffy

It makes Jade scowl, just a little. Firstly, because she hates the word fluffy, and the idea of feeling that way. Secondly, because *what on earth* kind of amazing date would Tori Vega have in the middle of a creepy abandoned park?

She remembers taking Tori there once, the morning she offered her a ride to school. The intent had been to terrify Tori, and it seemed to have worked. She hadn't *really* intended to leave her there, but when it worked out that way, it was all the better for the prank she was pulling. And now Tori is going there willingly...

It just doesn't add up, somehow.

Jade is perceptive, and tries to pay attention to the people around her, mostly because she likes picking out their flaws. Today, she finds herself paying extra attention to Tori, which is...well, most of her attention. Tori has a way of drawing her gaze because she's so ridiculous most of the time. And today, she sees that Tori is definitely in a good mood. She's smiling, and relaxed, and laughs easily.

This is in contrast to her appearance, which is decidedly...well, rough is the best word. Usually, when Tori hasn't slept well, it's obvious—messy hair, dark circles under her eyes. The only difference is, usually when Tori hasn't slept well, she isn't cheerful the next day.

But today, one minute she's giggling at something Cat says at lunch, and the next minute she's falling asleep on Andre's shoulder.

Something doesn't add up. If Tori was asleep when Jade sent that text at 11pm, then Tori should have gotten even more sleep than Jade.

Jade watches her struggle to stay awake for the rest of the day, wondering. If nothing else, she's grateful that it's a welcome distraction from Beck, who is still around her for most of the day, and who she definitely isn't ready to talk to.

At the beginning of the next week, Beck approaches her at her locker. "Hey," he greets amiably.

Jade slams her locker and glares at him, "What do you want?"

He looks taken aback, "I'm just saying hey. You know, seeing how you are."

"I thought I told you to give me space," she snarls.

"You said you needed a week!" he snaps back.

"Yeah, well, for me that week isn't up!" she shoulders her bag and stomps away.

"It's been eight days!" he yells after her. She ignores him.

It's tense in the group for the rest of the day. Before, when she and Beck were just kind of silently coexisting, it was a little strange, but by this point, almost everyone knows how to navigate that kind of situation. Now, Jade is pointedly ignoring him, and Beck is clearly frustrated. Cat giggles nervously a lot throughout the day, Andre gazes between them warily, and Rex makes a few pointed comments about it feeling so cold in the group that his nipples are about to fall off, which makes Robbie cover his mouth and shoot a terrified glance at Jade.

And Tori, who looks more rested today and a little calmer, just looks between them, concern all over her features.

By the next day, even though Jade and Beck still aren't talking, it's more normal. And so is Tori. Jade watches her for the rest of the week, and nothing seems odd.

For the most part, anyway. Still, Jade isn't convinced that everything is normal, so when a lunchtime finds the two of them sitting together, waiting for the rest of their friends to acquire food

and join them, Jade scrutinizes her.

“What?” Tori’s expression becomes perturbed when she notices Jade staring.

“Who were you meeting in Shadow Creek Park?” Jade asks directly.

Tori looks at the table, “No one you know,” she says, her voice slightly higher.

Jade wants to roll her eyes at that non-response, but she keeps her gaze steady, hoping to intimidate Tori. “Why would you meet someone there, of all places?”

Tori glances up, but can’t keep eye contact. “It’s private,” she answers, a little calmer now.

Jade *does* roll her eyes at this. “So, you’re meeting a secret someone at a very private location. Are you sure this was a date and not some kind of government espionage mission?”

“Wait, did you hear that?” Tori asks, frowning.

“Stop changing the subject,” Jade snaps.

“I’m not. Don’t you hear that? It sounds like Sinjin screaming.”

Jade listens for a second, but definitely can’t hear any screaming over the amplified murmurs of all the conversations around them. “You’re deflecting,” she accuses.

“I’m *not*, but I’m not going to tell you anything about my date,” Tori says firmly.

“Fine,” Jade answers, “But I’ll find out,” she continues in a low voice just as Andre and Cat join them at the table. Tori gives her a wary look, but doesn’t answer.

“Tamales today!” Andre announces eagerly as he sets his paper plate down.

“Yeah,” Cat begins to add, but then stops abruptly when a noise pierces the air. They’ve all stopped talking now, and they watch as Sinjin runs through the Asphalt Café, wailing continuously, and is chased by Lane, who yells something about the emergency eyewash station. It takes several long moments for his scream to die away as Lane chases him around the building.

“What was *that* about?” Beck asks casually as he drops into the seat next to Cat.

“Who can tell?” Andre stares in the direction they disappeared, looking concerned and confused.

Jade, however, is staring at Tori who, just for a moment, meets her eye and half-shrugs awkwardly, her smallest expression of *I told you so*.

Scowling, Jade spends the rest of lunch avoiding eye contact with both Beck and Tori.

By the end of the week, Jade realizes her awkward feelings about Beck have mostly evaporated, and that she does kind of miss him. Maybe it’s because her fascination with Tori’s weird date has started to abate a little; she’s still curious, sure, but Tori has been her normal boring self for over a week now, and as far as Jade can tell from conversation and Slap updates, Tori hasn’t been on another date with her mystery suitor.

So on Friday, she approaches him at his locker. He glances at her, his expression hardening slightly, but then he says, “Hey.”

“Hey,” she answers tonelessly, staring at him.

He stares back at her, until his expression starts to soften. “Is there a reason you’re here?” he asks. It’s a prompt, not a taunt.

“Want to hang out this weekend?” Jade asks, looking away.

Beck is smiling fully now, “So the week is up?”

“Yeah.”

“And you miss me?”

“I wouldn’t go that far,” Jade replies, but she smiles a little. She always misses him when they aren’t speaking. That had been the real perk of dating him, getting to hang out with her best friend all the time.

On Saturday, Jade goes over to Beck’s trailer and they watch a movie together. They cuddle, sort of, mostly out of habit and...it’s nice. It’s nice to still have someone who she doesn’t really mind touching her.

Midway through the movie, though, Jade starts to get a little bored, because the movie is only okay. She gets out her PearPhone and starts to check The Slap. As she sees an update from Tori detailing her excitement about family potpie, she clicks on her profile, idly wondering if there are any other clues about Tori’s date in her updates.

Evidently, Beck feels the same kind of disinterest about the movie, but it takes Jade awhile to realize he’s looking over her shoulder. When she looks at him, he asks, “Whatcha doin?” in his singsongy voice.

She turns her phone’s screen off, “Nothing.”

“Any reason in particular you’re going through all of Tori’s updates?”

Jade side-eyes him, and it occurs to her that he might know something. “Not really. I’ve just been trying to figure out who she’s seeing.”

Beck looks surprised, “She’s seeing somebody? I had no idea.”

“She had a date two weekends ago.”

“Well, if we haven’t heard anything, maybe it didn’t go well.”

“No, it went well. But she won’t answer my questions about it.”

“Did it ever occur to you that she doesn’t really have much of a reason to confide in you?” Beck asks pointedly.

Jade wants to retort that Tori confided in her enough to ask her for a ride to her date, but somehow, that seems like something she should keep between them. Instead she scowls. Beck makes that

irritating superior face he gets when he thinks he's won. "Well, *still*," Jade gripes, "She's never kept a secret like this from me *before*."

Beck shrugs and looks away, "Some secrets are hard to tell," he replies, and his voice is quieter now. Sensing some shift in his mood, Jade just grunts and goes back to her phone. Beck is quiet for most of the rest of the evening, and gives her an awkward one-armed hug when she leaves.

Jade feels validated by the fact that at least she seems to know more about this date of Tori's than anyone else. But still, Tori's evasiveness bothers her.

The next day, they've all agreed to meet up at Nozu. Jade shows up uncharacteristically early, but it's mostly because Beck offered to give her a ride and, seeing his offer as a gesture of goodwill for the new phase their friendship is settling into, she'd accepted. He's oddly quiet and closed-off during the whole drive, which is unsettling, and gives Jade the strange feeling of missing him even though they're in the same space.

Cat and Robbie arrive next, followed closely by Tori and Andre. Tori takes her seat next to Jade at the table, sniffs, and groans. "Oh, no. It reeks of squid in here," she moans.

Jade sniffs, noting that everyone else is doing the same. "No," Cat says decidedly, "It smells like rice. And green tea."

"Yeah, Tori, what are you on about?" Andre asks.

"Seriously, you guys don't smell that?" Tori implores.

Robbie touches her arm, "Are you having a bad flashback from the, um, wallet incident?"

Tori jerks her arm away, "No," she scowls, "Fine, maybe I'm just crazy. I guess nobody else smells the stupid squid!" She throws up her hands.

Mrs. Lee comes to take their order, and her smile turns into a petulant sneer when she sees who is at the table. Still, their food arrives appearing as delicious as always, and conversation is good.

"Oh!" Andre announces mid-meal, "I forgot to tell y'all. Karaoke Dokie is having a big karaoke showdown two Fridays from now. Cash prize. You want to go?"

There are excited murmurs of assent, and then Tori's disappointed groan, "I can't!"

Andre looks at her askance, "You already have plans for *two weeks* from now?"

Tori looks flustered and opens her mouth, stuttering a little, when Robbie cries out, "Oh, chiz!" and stares at his crotch. He glances up to find everyone staring at him, and he explains, "I spilled my soy sauce."

"Oh!" Cat says quickly, "That will stain so fast! Here," and promptly begins to pour her green tea onto Robbie's pants.

"Cat!" he screams, pushing away from the table. He stands and begins wildly fanning his steaming crotch.

"Oh no," Cat looks horrified, "I forgot it was hot!" Andre and Beck are both staring at Robbie's pants with matching expressions of extreme distress.

Jade is torn, because watching Robbie experience pain is always entertaining, and he is hopping around most amusingly, but Tori had been flustered by Andre's question, and that interests her. So she turns to Tori, who is watching the scene playing out with concern. "So why are you busy two weekends from now?" she asks very directly.

Tori looks at her, and then at their definitely preoccupied friends, and leans in, lowering her voice, "It's when our schedules line up again."

Jade scrunches her brow for a split second before she puts Tori's comment into context. Her eyes widen. "*Oh*," is all she says, her interest sufficiently piqued.

Tori has another date coming up.

New

Beck drives her home after the late lunch, and she's excited enough about her discovery that she has to tell him. "Tori has another date coming up."

"Oh?" he responds lightly.

"Yeah. Help me think of ways to sabotage it."

"Really?" he asks, sounding disappointed.

"Or at least like...spy on her." She tries to think. She doesn't think she ever took Beck to Shadow Creek Park, because he isn't afraid of anything, so she never really tried to scare him. "Do you think I can go to the same area and somehow seem like it's an accident?" she asks.

"Jade..." Beck says, and she can't quite decipher his tone.

"What?" she responds, "There's something weird going on here. Tori is *definitely* acting weird."

"Jade," he says again, his voice a little stronger, but still toneless.

"Maybe you guys don't see it, but I do. And I'm gonna find out what's going on. Because I want to."

"Jade," Beck says, "I'm gay."

"You're...what?!"

His eyes are still on the road, but as she stares at him, he blinks several times, the only indication of his emotional state. "I didn't know how to tell you." There's silence, as Jade tries to come up with what to say, but finds herself completely tongue-tied. "But you're my best friend, and I wanted to tell you first."

"I...okay."

"Okay?" he asks.

"Yeah."

"...that's it?"

"Well, what did you want me to say?"

"I don't know, I just thought you'd have more to say than that!"

"Well, I'm sorry, did you think that this might be a little confusing? I mean, when did you know? Were you ever..." Her voice breaks slightly, as she thinks about all the times he told her he loved her.

He shakes his head, "I really only realized around when we broke up, when I was trying to figure out why we didn't feel right anymore." He glances at her, catches her eye for a moment. "I *did* love

you, Jade. Still do. You're the best woman I've ever known, and it's too bad that I can't love you like a boyfriend should, because I want to have you close to me always. But..." he trails off, then shrugs. "I started to wonder, when I was never interested in any other girls but you. And then when I got back together with you, and that sexual spark was gone..." He shakes his head. "But it really wasn't so strong even before, was it? It was mostly us just experimenting."

"Yeah," Jade concedes hollowly. Sex had never been a huge part of their relationship, really. Jade had told herself it was because that degree of intimacy was difficult for her, but Beck had never pushed, and anything they did was because Jade had wanted to. Mostly they just masturbated together, or it was handjobs. They'd done some oral...or, well, she'd done it to him, and he'd never seemed interested in reciprocating. And they'd tried intercourse a few times, but agreed it was not quite as fun or satisfying as other things.

"So...I put some things together. I just had never really thought of it before. I figured the feelings I had for boys in the past was just me being an actor and being able to put myself in other people's shoes and to understand what they'd see as attractive on a man. I disowned my feelings." He glances at her again. "I'm sorry."

"For *what*?" she asks.

"For not realizing sooner."

"I'm not sorry," she answers. "If we'd never dated, we wouldn't be as close as we are now. So stop apologizing."

"Okay," he cracks a smile. "So...are we cool?"

"Yeah," she side-eyes him. "Don't be afraid to talk to me," she commands.

"I'm not afraid. It's just like I said. Some secrets are hard to tell."

"Hmm," Jade grunts in response, and thinks back to when he said it. Abruptly, the memory comes to her. They had been discussing *Tori*.

Oh my god, she thinks, just restraining herself from saying anything to Beck. Suddenly, she thinks she understands *Tori's* secret.

Tori's meeting a woman in Shadow Creek Park.

It's when Beck drops her off that she has a horrifying thought. *Tori* had said their "schedules" needed to line up and Jade unwillingly thinks of menstrual cycles. She shudders, thinks about it again, and realizes no two people could possibly menstruate so much that they could only meet once in a great while.

Then she begins to wonder if *Tori* is having an orgy with a group of women. She shakes that thought away. She's being ridiculous.

If nothing else, the thought of *Tori* having an orgy with a group of women in the middle of Shadow Creek Park helps crystalize the story concept that had been festering in the back of Jade's head for

months. She begins to realize that a key part of the story has to do with a woman trying to summon the devil the way women supposedly did in colonial times.

She has a feeling this is not a piece she'll be allowed to perform at school.

She works on her idea a bit for the next few days, whenever she has a free moment. She's working on it at the beginning of the lunch period, waiting for Cat to bring them both a spaghetti taco. Tori takes the seat across from her with a sigh. "Hey," she greets casually.

"Shut up, I'm working," Jade responds.

"Ooookay, then," Tori says, "I'll just sit here in awkward silence then."

"I said," Jade stops and looks up at Tori. "Why, what did you want to talk about?" she asks with fake sweetness.

"Oh, um, we don't have to talk," Tori looks wary now, "It's fine, really."

"Oh, really? Because I thought I just heard you say, 'I'll just sit here in awkward silence,' like some kind of martyr." Jade mocks Tori in the Sweet Sally Peaches voice she always uses.

"I don't talk like that," Tori snaps back, like always. Jade kind of likes the familiarity in their banter.

"Why don't we talk anymore?" Jade changes tactics, trying to sound sad now. "You know you can tell me anything."

"No, I...really don't know that," Tori answers skeptically, eying her.

"I'm pretty good with secrets, believe it or not," Jade tells her candidly.

"Who says I have a secret?" Tori asks, but it comes out quickly, and high-pitched.

Jade shrugs, and notices Andre approaching from across the Asphalt Café, so she takes a chance. "Listen, your secret...I know. And you can trust me with it because Beck has told me the same thing."

Tori's eyes widen. "Wait, Beck is...like me?"

Andre slides into the seat just next to Tori and greets them both, so all Jade can do is nod very slightly to answer Tori. Tori spends most of lunch in contemplative silence, though Jade catches her surreptitiously watching Beck.

Jade wants to laugh, because of how easy it really is to read Tori, once you start paying attention.

For her part, at first Tori isn't quite sure what to do with the information Jade gives her. Though she hasn't exactly admitted anything to Jade, Jade still seems to think she knows Tori's secret. And though Tori isn't sure that Jade had Beck's permission to share his secret, her excitement about knowing it kind of gradually destroys her ability to not talk to him about it.

So about a week later, Tori approaches Beck while he's at his locker. "Hey, Beck!"

“Oh, hey Tori,” Beck greets as he digs around in his locker, “What’s up?”

“Well, I wanted to talk to you, actually, because…” Tori looks around, then drops her voice, “It’s about your secret.”

Beck slams his locker, looking angry and slightly panicked, “She *told* you?”

“Yes,” Tori hissed, “Because she was trying to get me to tell my secret. So it’s okay, because…” She pauses. It’s hard to actually say, so she settles on, “Me, too.”

Beck’s eyes widen, and his anger seems to evaporate, “You, too?” he asks.

“Yeah,” Tori grins, “Surprised?”

“Well, yeah, a little,” Beck leans against his locker. Their heads are close together, so they can talk quietly, but not so close that they look suspicious.

“I was a little about you, too,” Tori confesses, “I thought I would’ve been able to sense it somehow, you know? But I have to admit it explains some things. Like your hair.”

Beck chuckles a little and runs a hand through his hair. “What can I say?”

“Still, this is cool!” Tori grins.

Beck nods, “Yeah.” He looks around. “You’d think there’d be more of us around, huh? I kinda wish there were.”

“Eh, I dunno,” Tori wrinkles her nose. “It’d get pretty crazy. I mean, with my whole family, I feel like there are enough of us around, you know?”

“I…wait,” Beck begins, but he’s interrupted by the bell.

Tori grins, “I’d better get to class!” she calls, jogging away, leaving a slightly perplexed looking Beck behind her.

Just as Jade is beginning to wonder if she can find a reason to be out at Shadow Creek Park on the night of Tori’s date, she finds her opportunity.

“Hey,” Tori awkwardly approaches Jade at her locker. Jade just stares at her, enjoying watching her squirm. Tori smiles back, trying to break the tension. “I was wondering if…I could ask you for a favor again.”

“Go on,” Jade answers after a pause.

“I could…use a ride again on Saturday. To Shadow Creek Park.” She pauses. “I could use a ride there and back.”

Jade is silent, because she knows that sometimes, if you let Tori stew, she’ll end up babbling.

To Tori’s credit, she doesn’t. “Well? Will you?”

“Sure,” Jade says.

“I’ll give you...wait. You will?”

“Sure,” Jade repeats, “Don’t make me say it again, or it’ll become a no.”

“...Okay,” Tori smiles. “Um, thanks.”

“Yeah, whatever,” Jade slams her locker shut and starts to walk away.

“I’ll text you!” Tori calls. Jade just keeps walking, grinning a little. There’s going to be a price attached to this ride, but it’s not one Tori will know about.

Jade’s going to find out who she’s been meeting, whether Tori likes it or not.

It’s then that she realizes Tori had been about to offer her something in exchange for the ride, and she curses out loud, causing the group of nearby freshmen boys to scatter. Her eagerness had caused a big lapse in judgment. She tries to remind herself not to lose her edge.

She comes to get Tori at around the same time as last time, right when the sun is at that annoyingly low position in the sky. Tori is dressed similarly to her last date—t-shirt, jeans, denim jacket, glasses. Jade wonders if Tori is trying to accrue some lesbian street cred by dressing so casual. Not that she knows what lesbians like. But there has to be some reason Tori isn’t getting all dolled up for these dates.

Tori’s pretty quiet on the way over, and Jade tries not to get too worked up about the sun, although it is annoying her. She notes that Tori is tapping her fingers this time, in what must be another nervous gesture.

“So what are you going to give me for driving you to your date?” Jade asks abruptly, to break the silence.

Tori looks at her sharply, “Nothing? You didn’t ask for anything.”

“But you offered.”

“Yeah, but it wasn’t part of the agreement. You agreed to give me a ride before I offered you anything.”

“Well, maybe I want something now.”

“It wasn’t part of the agreement.”

“Maybe I’m making it part of my agreement to come get you.”

Tori sighs and admits, “I was going to offer to buy you some coffee.”

“That’s weak,” Jade is disappointed it wasn’t more interesting.

“Well, what else do you like?” Tori counters.

Jade thinks about it, “Yeah. You’re right. Not much else.”

Tori leans back, satisfied. “You might want coffee when you come get me. I’ll buy one for you then,” she offers.

Jade shrugs. They’re almost there, and honestly, she is likely to want a cup of coffee in a few hours. Then thinks about it, “Oh yeah, when am I supposed to come get you?” She has another thought, “There isn’t any cell service at Shadow Creek Park, so you can’t exactly text me when your date is over...”

“Oh, yeah,” Tori nods, “We’ll just agree on a time. I’ll be done by dawn.”

Jade’s fingers tighten on the steering wheel and she resists braking. “By *dawn*?!”

“Yeah,” Tori responds casually, “I know it’s early, and I mean, it’s okay if you’re a little late, but... dawn, at the earliest.”

“Tori...” Jade starts, trying to figure out where to even begin, as she pulls up to the park, “Just...no. This is insane. I’m not leaving you out here *all night*.”

“It’s okay!” Tori reassures, “I’ve done it before. Trina didn’t come get me until dawn last time, either.”

“Wait, Trina picked you up? Your date couldn’t even give you a ride home?” Jade is surprised to feel some *pity* for Tori, who is clearly so conflicted about meeting a woman that she can’t risk anyone she knows seeing them together.

“No, they can’t give me a ride,” Tori says firmly, and Jade immediately notices the vague pronoun. Jade has stopped the car and as Tori reaches for the handle, she locks it. Tori glares at her. “Let me out.”

“No. This is ridiculous, Tori. You can’t stay here all night. It isn’t safe!”

“I’ll be *fine*,” Tori insists, and she pulls the lock herself and steps out. “Thank you for the ride! I’ll see you in the morning, and get you that cup of coffee. Sounds good, eh?” She grins a very cheesy grin and begins to walk away.

For her part, Jade doesn’t move, just watches Tori walk away. Shadow Creek Park is on the outskirts of LA, where the city gives way to desert. Still, many years ago, some trees and bushes had been planted, which had since become a good-size grove of trees and overgrown shrubbery surrounded by derelict picnic benches, tumbleweeds, Joshua trees and a sad, rusty jungle gym. Jade doesn’t know why the park fell into disrepair, but figures it’s probably because it is so far from anything else; the sun is setting, and Jade can barely see any city lights from where she’s parked. She just watches as the gloaming dimness swallows Tori as she heads right for the grove of deciduous and evergreen trees that look unnatural on the landscape.

Jade sits in her car for several long minutes, wrestling with herself. It feels like a terrible idea to leave Tori alone in the park all night, but she had done it once before, and Tori had been fine...she thinks again, and realizes that Tori had lied to her last time. She hadn’t been asleep when Jade texted, she had still been up here, without a cell phone signal. She’d texted back when she’d gotten into cell range again, not when she woke up.

Maybe Tori would be fine. But Jade realizes that if she isn't, she can't have it on her conscience. Maybe she likes Tori to suffer sometimes, but she likes to cause it and witness it. Not passively stand by and let it happen when she isn't there.

So, steeling herself, Jade turns off her car and steps out. The sun has set, and with her headlights now off, Jade has to stand for a moment and let her eyes adjust to the dimness. It doesn't take too long because the sky is well lit. She glances up to take in a cloudless sky full of stars, obscured only by the luminous full moon on the horizon, and thinks for a moment that she can understand why someone would go on a date here. It's gorgeous, quiet and yes, very private. As far down the road that she can see, there are no cars approaching.

She begins marching toward the trees, and as she gets close, she calls, "Tori!" She feels confident that Tori's date isn't here yet, because there are no other cars in sight. Then again, she thinks as she slows, maybe Tori's date was to be dropped off, too. Just how secretive is this relationship? She calls again, "Tori! I'm not leaving you here!"

There's no answer, only silence. Desert silence, tiny little animal sounds, the rustling of the wind in the trees. As Jade gets closer to the trees, she begins to realize how dark it actually is in the grove. She gets out her PearPhone so that she has a source of light and begins to step into the woods.

It isn't long before she realizes she doesn't want to go far in, because it's hard to see and it's so overgrown that it's kind of hard to trek through. Jade isn't exactly a hiker, and she doesn't want to step wrong and twist an ankle or something. She wonders what on earth is appealing about these woods to Tori and her date.

Just as she's about to call to Tori one more time and then turn around, she spots a flash of color on the ground. She shines her phone light on it and approaches. Though she's pretty sure she knows what it is, it's so strange that she has to get close.

It's Tori's clothes, folded clumsily and in a little pile at the base of a tree. *All* of Tori's clothes, Jade notes as she takes in the pale blue bra and the paisley pair of panties on top of the pile. As Jade stands up, a glint of something catches her eye, and she notices, strangest of all, Tori's glasses, tucked into a little knothole in the tree trunk.

It's so strange that it makes Jade's stomach churn with nervousness for a moment. Especially since, as she looks, she's struck with the creeping feeling of being watched.

She swivels around a few times, shining her phone light, but sees nothing. She shakes off her nerves, and shouts one last time, "I refuse to leave, Tori!" Then she turns and begins walking back out of the grove of trees.

She feels better as soon as she's out of the thick darkness beneath the trees and is striding across open land back to her car. She glances behind her a few more times, but there's no indication that anyone is behind her. She tells herself that maybe Tori *was* watching her back in the forest, probably with her date, and probably giggling about it. Naked. Jade shakes her head. No matter how she lays it out, it's still freaky and weird.

So she sits in her car, folding her arms. She's going to stay right here, and she'll wait for Tori and her date to emerge.

She entertains herself for awhile with her phone or her car radio, but before too long, she's feeling the need for a cup of coffee. Still, she refuses to leave. Eventually, she tips her head back. She

needs to take a nap, then she'll resume her lookout...

Jade wakes up yelling, and it takes her a moment to realize that someone has knocked on her window. She takes a deep breath as she looks at Tori in her passenger's side window, feeling that she's blushing and angry about it. She unlocks her car and Tori slides into the seat, looking disheveled, sleepy and happy. "Hey!" she greets happily.

It's already too much cheer for Jade, who is taking in the pink tinges on the edge of the sky. It's dawn. She can't even bring herself to look at the clock in her car. It's probably not that much earlier than when she gets up for school, but it's Saturday, and that makes it worse. "Shut up," she says, sitting up in her seat and running a hand through her hair.

"Looks like you need that coffee," Tori smiles as Jade rubs her eyes, "Sorry you were waiting for so long."

"Like you don't know I've been here all damn night," Jade snaps. "Are we just going to pretend that last night didn't happen?"

Tori looks out the window and says nothing, which is all the answer Jade needs. She rolls her eyes and starts her car. Now that she's awake, she realizes how chilly it is, and she's grateful that her leather jacket kept her warm during the night. Tori stretches out in her seat, looking relaxed and content. Jade notices a stick and some dry leaves in her wild hair and is met with a sudden image of Tori, naked, on her back in the middle of the woods, back arching as a strange woman goes down on her.

She really needs that damn coffee. "Where can I get a coffee around here?" she grumbles.

"I think there's a Jet Brew pretty nearby. I'll check my PearPhone as soon as I have service," Tori offers, turning her phone back on.

Jade grunts her agreement. "This coffee better be worth the night I just spent in my car."

"I told you to go home," Tori says, sounding stubborn.

"Yeah, well, maybe if I'd actually been able to tell that you were *alive*, I would have. Maybe if you'd introduced me to your 'date,' I would've felt safer leaving you alone with he—with them."

Tori's smiling a little, "You were worried?"

"I was *not*, I just don't want to be responsible for your death, you freak. God, for someone who doesn't know how to take risks, you're sure acting fucking insane."

"Because I'm not doing anything risky!" Tori snaps.

"It sure as hell doesn't look that way from here! You look like you're being incredibly stupid!"

They're silent for a few minutes, until both their phones chirp with notifications, as they're back in cell phone range. Jade glances at hers, which is almost dead, and turns it off. Tori pulls up directions to Jet Brew and tells Jade where to turn in a few miles. Jade nods, and they're quiet again.

Finally, Tori speaks, “I have a secret,” she confesses, “that maybe you should know.” She takes a breath.

Jade’s ready and ends up speaking over Tori, “I know, you’re a lesbian,”

“I’m a werewolf.” Tori says at the exact same moment.

“What?!” Jade actually does brake the car without meaning to this time, but gains control quickly.

“Wait, you think I’m a—” Tori begins.

“I’m sorry, did you say werewolf?!” Jade interrupts.

Tori sighs and rubs her forehead, “Turn here,” she reminds Jade, “Let’s get you that coffee.”

Waning

They don't say much until Jade goes through the drive-through to get coffee. Tori pays for a cup for each of them, and Jade pulls over into the mostly-empty parking lot so they can sit and drink the coffee for a bit.

"So, you're a werewolf," Jade finally says.

Tori nods, "Yep."

"I don't believe you," Jade immediately responds.

Tori rolls her eyes, "You don't have to believe me, it's true."

"You probably actually have some kind of really interesting delusional disorder," Jade muses, glancing over at her. "Maybe you're more interesting than I originally thought."

Tori folds her arms. "I never pegged you for a skeptic."

"Please, I'm skeptical about everything, even the things that fascinate me," Jade retorts.

Tori nods to concede the point. "Well, if you need to see it to believe it, drive me out there tonight, and I'll show you."

Jade raises her eyebrow, "You'll show me? Tonight?"

"Yes," Tori answers patiently, "There are three nights to every full moon, and I have to change for all of them, so take me out there, and you can see."

"What will your date say?" Jade asks, abruptly wondering if Tori has some sort of weird animal sex in the park.

Tori laughs, "Jade, there *is* no date."

Jade feels a little foolish, so she retorts, "Oh, I see, so your date is a big, beautiful woman, *la luna!* You know, the m—"

"I know what it means!" Tori interrupts sharply.

"Why are you telling me this anyway?" Jade asks, trying to move past the awkward moment.

Tori looks thoughtful, "Well, you have helped me out by giving me a ride. And you were getting pretty suspicious, especially since Trina couldn't come get me this morning. But mostly, I guess, because out of all our friends, I thought you'd be the least freaked out by it."

She refuses to let the comment make her smile. "You have friends?" she asks, but it lacks the venom of her usual insults, so Tori just sighs a little. "Fine," Jade agrees, "I'll give you another ride out to Shadow Creek Park tonight. But this had better be good."

"I'm pretty sure you won't be disappointed," Tori smiles.

Jade wishes that there was any other time of day that she could drive Tori out to Shadow Creek Park. She's beginning to really resent the sun.

Tori gets in the car, again, dressed comfortably, though this time she is carrying her enormous purse. "Thanks again," she says casually.

"You know, maybe you should get your driver's license if you need to go run around the park so often."

"I'm trying!"

"Try harder!" Tori sighs, and lets Jade fume at the sun for awhile. Her leg is bouncing again. Jade tries to ignore it, but after a while, she can't. "Control your leg!"

"I'm sorry!" Tori shoots back, "But I'm nervous," she admits.

"Why?"

"Well," Tori answers awkwardly, "I've never really done this with another person. I mean, another person who can't also change."

Jade doesn't have a good answer for that, so she just keeps driving. There's a gorgeous sunset on the horizon when they make it to Shadow Creek Park, and Tori's nerves don't seem to abate for the whole drive.

"Okay," Jade says as she parks, "What now?"

Tori looks at the sky, and there's a slight waver to her voice. "Well. It's going to happen pretty soon. But there's a little time." She glances at Jade. "Did you have any questions before we go out there? Because I won't be able to answer them after I'm changed."

Jade snorts. "No, not really, because I'm not expecting anything to happen."

Tori sighs exasperatedly, "Guess you're in for a surprise."

"What's it like? Changing?" Jade asks. Though she's still skeptical, a part of her wants to play along. A part of her thinks, if this is real, she will want to know everything about it.

Tori shrugs. "I mean, it's weird? I'm pretty used to it now, but I remember the first few times it happened, it was...kind of uncomfortable. But didn't really hurt. It's like when you have Novocain or whatever at the dentist and you can feel that something is happening in your mouth, but it doesn't hurt. That's what it's like when my bones and muscles and everything restructure themselves."

Jade nods thoughtfully. "Okay. I can get that."

Tori glances outside again, and says uncertainly, "Maybe we should get out of the car."

"Sure," Jade says easily, as they step out, Tori carrying her bag. They begin walking toward the grove of trees, and Jade asks, "So, what happens when you change? Are you a violent maniac? Because I brought a silver pair of scissors, just in case this is an elaborate plot to kill me."

Tori shoots her an irritated look, “If that were the case, you’d have been dead last night.”

“So you *were* watching me?”

“Yes,” Tori says simply.

“So when you change...” Jade prompts, wanting a real answer this time.

“I’m still me,” Tori replies. “I don’t become some kind of mindless killing machine. I’m me, just... a little wilder.”

“Uh huh,” Jade says skeptically.

They’re at the grove of trees now, and Jade eyes Tori’s bag as she stops. “What’s in there, your werewolf costume?”

Tori folds her arms. “No. It’s for my clothes.”

“You didn’t have your bag last time,” Jade points out.

“I’m not sure how you’ll react. So I figured I’d keep everything contained.” Tori looks at Jade. “I’m going to go in alone,” she says.

Jade folds her arms. “I thought the point was that I would watch you change.”

Tori shakes her head. “Well, um, no. Because...It’s kind of private. Even when I’ve changed with my family, we do the changing part alone. Mostly because we don’t want to see each other naked. And I’m not about to get naked in front of you.”

Jade gives her an appraising look, then shrugs. “Suits me.”

“Good.” Tori glances skyward again. The sun is almost completely gone. “I’m going to go in now.”

“Have fun,” Jade answers sardonically. Tori looks at her for a moment with eyes that seem more luminous than normal, but then she turns. Jade watches Tori walk deep enough into the trees that she can conceal herself.

Then there’s not much to do but wait.

At first, Jade keeps her eyes on the trees, wondering when Tori will emerge. There are occasional sounds of someone moving around. Rustling, sticks snapping, that sort of thing, but eventually, those sounds become quiet. But still no Tori emerges.

After five minutes, in which Jade has found her attention wandering to the night sky many times, she calls, “If this is a prank, just give up. I’ve already lost interest.”

It’s then that she sees movement. She squints, and gradually makes out a low, lupine shape moving toward her slowly. She folds her arms and says, “Okay, but you have to actually show yourself.”

The creature moves cautiously to the tree line, lifts its head, and sniffs. Then it moves out into the open and stands in front of Jade, staring right at her.

Jade stares for a moment, then laughs once. “Okay, how on earth did you train this dog?” She looks beyond the creature into the forest, expecting to see Tori hiding behind a tree, waiting for her reaction. When she doesn’t see her, she looks back at the creature. Its eyes are narrowed.

Jade begins to circle it, studying it. She calls back into the woods, “Props on finding such a wolf-like one, too! What is it, a husky-wolf mix?” But as she says it, she knows it can’t be right. It’s wolf-like, kind of, but definitely not dog-like. A little chill runs through her as she starts to really see the things about the creature that feel...wrong. The legs are too long, and look almost weirdly gangly on the creature. The head is too big, the muzzle is too short. And the paws...are not canine paws. Not quite. They have one too many digits, they’re a little too big, and they don’t seem quite flat. She can see that they’re almost knuckle-like in the way the bones form.

There’s also the fact that it doesn’t seem to act like a dog or a wolf at all. It watches her as she circles, moving its head with her, maintaining eye contact. But not threateningly, like a frightened animal might. The eyes are wide now, as if needing to see her reaction.

She stops in front of the creature...Tori...and finally says, “Okay, holy chiz.”

Tori sits, and her head tilts to one side, almost satisfied.

Jade shakes her head for a moment, looking at her. “This is real?” she asks.

Tori tilts her head back and then down again in what looks like a very awkward nod.

“Whoa,” is all Jade can say for awhile. Tori continues to stare at her for a few minutes, then just gets up and begins to walk away. “Hey, wait, come back!” Jade calls.

Tori looks back at her, and then takes off running. Jade begins to follow at first, then stops. Running through the dark after her doesn’t exactly seem like the best idea, even though she can basically see. After a moment, Tori seems to realize she’s not being followed and stops abruptly, spinning back toward Jade on stiff legs, her ears pointed straight up.

Jade stands there and folds her arms, “I’m not going to chase you!” she says. Tori’s entire body seems to droop, and she slinks back toward Jade. “You’re ridiculous,” Jade tells her as she gets close, but then she has an idea. She looks around until she finds a decent sized stick on the ground and holds it up.

In response, Tori growls a little, but her eyes follow the stick as Jade holds it. Jade waves it around a little, watching as Tori’s head twitches. She smirks, then tosses it.

Tori takes off like a shot, and Jade doubles over in laughter. She’s still laughing when Tori slinks back, holding the stick in her mouth, and drops it at Jade’s feet. Jade controls herself, then throws it again. After a few repetitions, she stops laughing, and Tori stops slinking in embarrassment, and they’re both sort of having fun.

And then, Jade gives in to her crueller side. She has to. She wiggles the stick, then pulls back, arcs her arm, but doesn’t let go. Tori takes off, then stops almost immediately, spinning back to Jade and letting out a frustrated whine.

Jade is laughing again, and Tori runs toward her and leaps up on her, knocking her over. Tori is growling and nosing at her shoulder and neck, but she’s not hurting her, and Jade finds herself

laughing and rolling around, trying to escape her. After a few moments, Tori backs off, and Jade gets back to her feet.

“Sorry,” Jade says then, “That was probably really degrading.” Tori growls briefly. “But you clearly have excess energy, so...”

As if in answer, Tori jumps up at her again, and Jade has a chance to see her paws a little better. They look like they could grip things, a little, but not like a person. Maybe like a polydactyl cat can sort of grasp things better than a dog.

“Whoa,” Jade backs up so that Tori can’t jump up on her. “If you need to run around, go ahead,” she says, and Tori takes off, running straight into the grove of trees. “Okay!” Jade calls, “I’ll just... stay here.”

For what feels like almost twenty minutes, Jade stands, huddled in her jacket and playing a game on her phone, wondering idly if Tori expects her to leave now. She’s just about to head to her car when Tori comes sprinting back out of the woods, panting, with sticks and leaves in her fur. She stops in front of Jade and looks up at her.

Jade sighs, “Come here,” she says, and picks some of the larger sticks and leaves out of Tori’s fur. “Okay, so...” Jade is thinking out loud now, “You said your family changes, too. So is it genetic?” Tori makes a kind of low bark that Jade takes for a yes. “So...is Trina a werewolf, too?” A growl this time, but Jade thinks it’s still a yes. “Interesting.”

Tori’s watching her, sitting now, and Jade is still thinking aloud. “But I’ve seen you on nights of the full moon before...” she says thoughtfully. “I feel like you’ve been to every Full Moon Jam. And performed in some.” She thinks about it. She’s pretty sure Full Moon Jams actually take place on the full moon. “And other than this weekend, I don’t think I’ve ever seen you duck out of events suspiciously. You or Trina.” Tori growls and tosses her head, and it’s clear that she wishes she could speak. Jade smirks a little. “It really doesn’t add up...” she muses.

Tori exhales. It sounds just like a sigh.

“But on the other hand,” Jade continues musing, “This does explain a few things. Like when you could smell the squid and no one else could.” Tori almost yips this time, as though excited. “Okay,” Jade nods, “So you have good senses?” Another yip, then a thought, “But you wear glasses.” Tori growls. Jade stares at her. “Do you need glasses as a wolf? I’m guessing no, but...that still seems weird.” Tori huffs.

Jade can accept Tori as a werewolf, because she’s right in front of her, and even though she chases sticks and can’t talk, she definitely has Tori’s personality. It’s a lot harder to imagine Tori’s sister and parents as werewolves. “Okay, so your family are werewolves and you are one because of genetics. Can it be spread?” Tori grunts. “I mean, there are legends.” Another growl. “I mean, I guess you shouldn’t bite me. Have you bitten me?” Jade tries to think. They’ve had weird tussles, and have had to do strange performances in Sikowitz’s class. She doesn’t think so, though. “It seems like, if it could spread, it would have to be something in your blood, or saliva, or something, that could fundamentally change human tissue...” her eyes widen, “Oh my god. We gave Robbie your blood!” Tori growls and tosses her head. Jade subsides. “Of course. We’d know if Robbie had been changed. He wouldn’t have been able to function if he’d become a werewolf.” She studies Tori again, “But then how would you have a human blood type?” Tori just stares back. Jade shrugs. “Maybe you are like Rhesus monkeys or something. Maybe they should have done that blood type research on werewolves instead.”

Tori growls at this, and Jade laughs. She pulls her coat tighter around her, suppressing a shiver. Tori noses at her leg, and Jade looks at her uncertainly. Tori begins walking toward Jade's car. "Wait, where are we going?" Tori turns and gives her a narrow-eyed look. She follows Tori to the car. "Are we going somewhere?" A growl. "Then why are we getting in the car?" Tori presses her nose against the back door, and Jade opens it. Tori jumps in, and curls up in the backseat. Bemused, Jade gets in the driver's seat.

Tori sits up in the backseat, staring at Jade in the rearview mirror. She sniffs around in the backseat, then sits up again, holding the blanket Jade keeps in her backseat in her mouth. "Oh! No, I'm okay now that we're in the car," Jade answers the question she's pretty sure she's being asked. Tori turns around in the backseat a few times, and kind of ends up mostly under the blanket.

Jade hadn't really planned to spend another night in her car, but now that she and Tori are both in it, she realizes she can't really leave. She's sure that Tori would be fine in the park all evening—she's apparently spent enough nights doing just that—but Jade decides she can't really kick her out of the car. "Are there werewolf poachers?" she asks. Tori just huffs in response. Jade doesn't know exactly what that means, but it strikes her that even as a wolf, Tori might not be safe. And as they can't really go anywhere...Jade realizes she's a little stuck.

She idly wonders if Tori wants to run around some more, but a glance in her rearview mirror shows her that Tori appears quite relaxed. "Here's to another night in my car," Jade mutters. Tori whines slightly, so Jade says, "Shut up. It's fine. I'd rather you be in here than in the woods."

Tori exhales audibly in response. Jade tips her head back and closes her eyes. She slept so poorly last night that she's pretty sure she'll fall asleep soon.

She wakes up to the sound of her car door slamming shut. It startles her, because she's almost never woken up by loud noises, but she keeps from crying out. She watches as, wrapped in the blanket from Jade's car, a clearly nude Tori starts walking quickly toward the grove of trees. Jade looks at her bare shoulders and calves, then looks away, rubbing her face. At least it's not dawn this time, but it's still early. Her caffeine headache is already setting in.

She stays with her eyes closed until Tori gets back in the car, in the back seat. For some reason, she doesn't want Tori to know she saw her walking away, so she feigns sleep. Tori clears her throat, and whispers, "Jade." Jade doesn't move. Then she feels a hand on her shoulder, and out of instinct, she slaps it away. "Ow!" Tori says, pulling her hand back.

"Why are you touching me?" she asks, blinking open her eyes. She turns to look at her. She has disheveled hair and wrinkled clothes, but she is human and clothed.

Tori shrugs awkwardly, "I figured since it's morning, you might want to get home to your bed."

Jade stares hard at her for a few moments, then says, "Actually, yes." She turns around and starts her car, then glances at Tori in her mirror. "Why are you in the backseat?"

"Oh. I, uh..."

"Get in the front seat," Jade orders, "I'm not your chauffer."

Tori slides out and then gets in the front, "I wasn't thinking," she explains.

“No, you were thinking like a dog,” Jade smirks a little. Tori shoots her a glare, but doesn’t respond.

They’re about halfway home when Tori says, “So. You had a lot of questions last night.”

“Yeah,” Jade agrees, “And you really didn’t give me any answers.”

“I couldn’t!” Tori punches her leg emphatically.

“I know. It was hilarious.”

Tori shoots her a dirty look, “Well, I was going to invite you over so maybe I can answer some of your questions before nightfall, but if you’re just going to be a gank about it...”

“Invite me over?”

“Well, I *was*.”

“You’re not going to Shadow Creek Park tonight?”

“I thought I’d stay in.”

“Okay...” Jade answers thoughtfully. They’re silent for awhile, and then Jade says, “Suppose I did show up.”

“That would be rude, as I haven’t invited you.”

“What time would be safe?”

Tori presses her lips together. Jade can’t quite see, but she swears it’s a smile. “I’ll text you.”

“Fine,” Jade answers.

She drops Tori off at home and stares at the house for a moment. A werewolf family lives there, she reminds herself. She shakes her head and drives home, ready to curl up in her bed to get a few hours of sleep while actually lying down.

Tori goes home and falls into bed for the next several hours. She slept pretty well in Jade’s car, actually, but her previous night of running around has left her sleep schedule a little bit screwed up. In the late morning, she gets up and sleepily trudges downstairs.

Her mom is on the computer at the kitchen table, while Trina is lounging on the couch. Holly glances up as she comes down the stairs, “Hi, sweetie,” she greets, “You want some breakfast?”

“Yes,” Tori groans. She’s starving.

“Well, you know how to use the stove,” Holly says cheerfully.

Tori sighs, “I know,” she whines. During the full moon, it’s usually good to eat a lot of protein, so she starts fixing some eggs and bacon for herself, thinking wistfully of when her mom used to make her breakfast. Ever since she and Trina started changing, her parents started to regard them as

basically adults, and pushed for them to be self-sufficient. Which was fairly okay for Tori, but with Trina, they constantly had trouble leaving her unmonitored.

Tori manages not to burn her breakfast and sits at the table next to her mom. “Where’s Dad?” she asks.

“Oh, he’s just putting in a few hours of work before it gets too late, and then he and I are going to go up to the canyons for the night.”

“Oh. Okay.”

“What are your plans?”

Tori swallows and says, “I’m going to have Jade over.”

“Oh, okay. Wolfsbane is where it always is, we should have plenty.”

Tori shakes her head, “No, I mean...She’s going to be here and I’m not going to take wolfsbane.”

Holly looks confused and a little alarmed. Trina lifts her head from the couch and yells, “Is this a murder plot? Should I call Dad?”

“No!” Tori scowls at her, then turns her attention back to her mom. “She was with me last night in the park.” Holly looks even more alarmed, “But she didn’t see me change! It wasn’t like that. She just saw me as a wolf.”

“I see,” Her mom responds, a little more calm, “Well, it’s a big step. This is a very personal part of yourself. Are you sure you’re ready to share it?”

Tori thinks about it, really for the first time. Since she was little, she knew to keep this secret, not because of any kind of terrible consequences, but mostly because no one “normal” would believe her. When she realized that Jade would believe in this, it seemed natural to tell her. Tori had barely considered how personal this was. “I mean, I already have shared it, so it seems a little moot,” she responds awkwardly.

“Okay,” Holly shrugs, “But you do have the right to withdraw it if you ever feel uncomfortable, you know. It’s still up to you. Work with what you are both comfortable with, and communicate about it, okay?”

Tori nods, “She’s coming over early so that we can talk about it.”

Trina stands up, “Personally, I don’t see why *any* of you would choose to deal with any of this,” she announces, and reaches into the top cupboard to pull down the wolfsbane. They have a few different forms of it that they get from behind the counter of a werewolf-run holistic shop in downtown LA, so they can take it in a variety of ways, but Trina prefers the capsules.

Tori looks to the middle of the table, where Trina has a days-of-the-week vitamin container for the capsules. She picks it up. “Didn’t you already take your wolfsbane today?” she asks.

“So?” Trina asks challengingly, after swallowing the capsule.

Tori looks to her mom, “Shouldn’t you, I don’t know, try to stop her?” One capsule a day during the full moon was considered sufficient to stop the change, but Trina always tended to go overboard

with the wolfsbane. Which, while it wasn't *dangerous*, per se, it sometimes made werewolves a little...unstable.

Holly goes back to her computer, "Oh, believe me. I'm not interested in ever trying to tell Trina what to do during the full moon."

Tori scowls, remembering that there were times when *she* was forced to take care of Trina during the full moon. Trina's wisdom teeth stands out as a shining example of this. The wolfsbane had not mixed well with her painkillers, and she had been nearly impossible to deal with. Closer to impossible than normal, anyway.

She thinks about her mother's insinuation that this is private, intimate. It's weird that it was almost instinctual to share something like that with Jade.

Jade comes over in the late afternoon. When she gets there, Tori's parents are just leaving. She waves to them awkwardly as they drive away, and knocks on the door.

Tori answers, dressed in jeans, a plaid shirt and her glasses. She smiles a little. "You came."

"You state the obvious," Jade scowls.

"Come on in."

"No parents tonight, huh?" Jade asks.

"Yeah," Tori shrugs, "It's their night to go running around."

Jade nods. It's still really hard to imagine Tori's parents turning into werewolves. She notices Trina sitting on the couch. "Oh, great. She's here tonight?"

"No," Trina says irritably, "I'm going to meet a guy tonight."

Jade lifts an eyebrow, glancing at Tori uncertainly, "I'm sure he'll be...impressed by your new look."

"Ew. No," Trina says sharply, "I don't do that."

Jade blinks in confusion, as Tori looks at Trina with distaste. "So, um, Jade," Tori prompts, "Shall we go upstairs?"

"Sure," Jade answers, shooting one last concerned look at Trina before following Tori up to her room.

"Sorry about that," Tori smiles awkwardly as she sits on her bed, "She's a bit...weird about the whole werewolf thing."

"Ya think?" Jade asks.

"Yeah. So, this is my room," Tori gestures.

"Oh, I know," Jade says, "I'm very familiar with your room."

Tori looks at her sharply for a moment, then subsides. “Right. I forgot you were a total creeper who snooped around in here for a half an hour one time.”

“Mmmhmm,” Jade hums, “Looks like you still have a lot of things in here...”

Tori folds her arm, “You know, I was so freaked out that day. Especially when you snapped your teeth. I thought for sure you had found something that gave me away as a werewolf...”

Jade chuckles, “Nah. *That’s* not what I found.”

Tori buries her face in her hands, “Oh my god.”

Jade sits down at the foot of Tori’s bed, pleased at the reaction, but she has mercy on her. “So, what’s up with your batshit sister?”

Tori lifts her head, “Well, the answer to that is related to a question you asked me last night. Remember how you were wondering how I ever appeared at the Full Moon Jam?”

“Yeah, how’d you manage that?” Jade asks.

“Well, there’s a plant called wolfsbane. It’s super toxic to humans, but if we take it, it suppresses the effects of the full moon. Well, mostly. We don’t change, but we might still be kind of...off. Especially if we take a lot. Which Trina does.”

Jade stares, “So the reason your sister is a freak is because she’s on this stuff?”

Tori nods, “Partly. She’s always been kind of crazy. But the wolfsbane doesn’t help. She never really liked changing when she was younger, and one day, she swore she started changing in the middle of school because her arm looked ‘hairier,’ so now she takes it all the time because she’s paranoid.”

“*Can* you change when it’s not the full moon?” Jade asks with great interest.

“It’s not unheard of,” Tori answers, “It takes either a ton of concentration, or there are some stories where someone has changed in a situation of life-threatening danger. Personally, I haven’t learned.”

“Hmm,” Jade digests this. “Okay, so, you’ve taken it to appear at the Full Moon Jam and things. You’ve never seemed all that off.”

Tori shrugs, “I try not to take it if I don’t have to. Strangely enough, that seems to help. Sometimes it can be a good thing to take it, though. I mean, my senses tend to be a bit better than a human’s normally, though not all the time. During the full moon, when I’m on wolfsbane, they are almost always better. I can hear myself singing better, so it gives me an edge while performing.”

“You didn’t perform in the last Full Moon Jam,” Jade realizes abruptly, “You said you had a throat thing.”

Tori chuckles a little, “Yeah, well, I was hoping to skip out on that one. I didn’t want to take my wolfsbane. I admit I felt a little weird that night. But I’m glad I went. You really killed it with your song that time.”

Jade tries not to smile. “Thanks,” she offers begrudgingly, because she doesn’t want Tori to know she liked the compliment. She tries to think more. “So, when did you know?”

“That I was a werewolf? I mean, since I could understand.”

“Okay, I guess I mean like...your first experience. I mean, are there like, werewolf puppies or something?”

Tori laughs, “No, and it’s a good thing, too, because they’d probably be nearly impossible to keep in line. The first change tends to happen around the onset of puberty. So for me, I was twelve.” She tilts her head thoughtfully, “It’s weird. Sometimes there’s mild amnesia because it’s such a shock for the body to experience, but I remember most of it.”

Jade nods thoughtfully, “Okay. So, can it spread?”

In response, Tori shrugs. “There are only legends. Biting does not appear to work. And I think we’d know if a blood transfusion did,” Tori glares, “I was a little nervous about that, by the way, because I couldn’t remember for sure if it was dangerous. I was pretty sure it wasn’t, but...”

“You gambled with Robbie’s life like that?”

“Actually, I think *you* gambled with it,” she shoots back.

Jade shakes her head a little. “Why is everything so up in the air with you guys? Don’t you talk to one another?”

“A little,” Tori answers, “But there’s not like a big subculture or anything. We mostly keep to ourselves. We don’t even have like an internet presence because we don’t want people to find out anything. So most of us just live a mostly human life and don’t know much more than they do.” Tori frowns, “Unless there’s some kind of werewolf initiation my parents are going to spring on me when I turn 18...”

“Wouldn’t put it past them,” Jade smirks, “But do you really think Trina would be able to keep her mouth shut about it if there were?”

“True,” Tori acknowledges.

Jade leans back, “How are we doing on time?”

Tori checks her clock, “We still have some.”

“What are we going to do after you change? I can’t exactly throw you a stick in here.”

Tori seems to deflate, “Okay, did you really have to do that?”

“What? You liked it.”

Tori shakes her head, but she’s smiling a little. “We’ll do what I usually do when I stay home on a wolf night. Marathon something on TV. Listen to music. These are nights I tend to be able to get to sleep.”

“You...watch TV?”

“Sure,” Tori nods. She stands up. “We can start now, if you want. Come downstairs, maybe Trina left.”

Jade glances at the TV in Tori's room, but decides not to question it. The downstairs TV is better, after all, and they can each have their own couch.

Unfortunately, when they go downstairs, Trina has not yet left. She's doing what looks like a sugar scrub on her face while standing at the counter. Jade raises an eyebrow and stage whispers to Tori, "Is excess facial hair a werewolf side effect?"

"Excuse me," Trina snaps, "But I'm doing this to give myself naturally soft skin."

"Okay. Whatever you say," Jade holds her hands up. Tori rolls her eyes and sits on the couch, changing the channel.

"Hey, I was watching that!" Trina calls.

"Too bad!" Tori answers. "We're watching something else now."

And they get sucked into a Law and Order: SVU marathon, while Trina curses at the mess she's making and at them. Before they know it, the sun is setting.

"Oh, chiz," Tori mutters when she notices the time. She stands up. "Okay, I'm going to go upstairs and...get changed," she finishes awkwardly.

"Yeah. Me, too," Trina says. She seems to have gotten most of the sugar scrub off of her face and out of her hair. The sisters head upstairs, leaving Jade downstairs with the TV.

About ten minutes pass. Jade allows herself to get sucked back into the episode, but when Trina comes downstairs, looking ready to go out, she starts to wonder. "Where's Tori?"

Trina shrugs, "Changing?"

"Yeah, but," she glances outside, "It's dark. Shouldn't she be done?"

"How should I know?"

"You're the only werewolf in the room!"

"Shhh!" Trina hisses.

Jade rolls her eyes and starts heading up the stairs. "Tori? Are you okay?"

She hears a whine, then a low, soft bark. Frowning, she heads to Tori's room and opens the door. Tori bounds out, nosing Jade's palm in gratitude.

"You locked yourself in your room?" Jade asks incredulously, trying not to laugh.

Tori shakes her head rapidly, which turns into a full-body shake. Then she stares toward the stairs.

Jade gets it. "Oooh. Trina shut the door on you." A growl. "That's not cool."

They begin to head downstairs together, where Tori stares at Trina, stiff-legged, and growls deep in her chest. Trina just huffs, "Oh, stop being so dramatic, I thought you might want some privacy."

Tori stares at her for a little longer, then relaxes and trots over to one couch, hopping up and facing the TV. Jade takes the other one.

After a few minutes, Jade picks up the remote and changes the channel. Tori stands up and snarls in protest. “Good luck changing it back,” Jade laughs.

Tori bounds off of her couch and onto Jade’s, basically tackling her. Jade sits up and holds the remote above her head and instinctively finds herself scolding Tori, “No!” she says. Tori’s ears droop and she hunches next to Jade. Feeling bad, Jade reaches out and begins to pet her, “Sorry,” she says, meaning it, as she scratches behind Tori’s ears. Tori closes her eyes and sighs, and her tail thumps the couch. A few moments later, Tori has rolled onto her back, her head in Jade’s lap, and Jade is rubbing her tummy. “I guess everybody does like this, huh?” she asks, tickling.

“What are you doing?” Trina asks, coming back into the living room and looking at them askance.

Tori jumps down and immediately moves back to her own couch. “Nothing,” Jade snaps, feeling embarrassed and not really knowing why. It had felt *right* to pet Tori like that, but now that she thinks about it...it probably is very odd. Jade glances at Tori and reminds herself that she’s *Tori*, not a dog. But Jade has always liked dogs, and was never allowed to have one. It was hard not to enjoy the moment.

Trina tosses her hands up, “Whatever, I won’t judge.”

Tori puts her paws over her face. Jade folds her arms. But a thought occurs to her and she looks at Tori, “Is this why you’re so weird with dogs?”

Tori lifts a paw and blinks at Jade.

“You know. You made that vicious Rottweiler I tried to give to Beck love you. And that big dog was so in love with you he dragged you all around while you were trying to sing the National Anthem.”

Tori whines and covers her face again. Jade smirks. “I’ll just take it as a yes.”

They get to enjoy the episode together for a little bit before Tori abruptly sits up, her ears perked, then jumps off the couch and sniffs the air. She looks at Jade, her eyes wide, then begins running toward the stairs.

“Tori!” Jade calls in confusion, but then there’s a loud knock at the door.

“I’ll get it!” Trina sings, trotting toward the door. She opens it, and steps back in shock. “Beck!”

“Hey,” he says uncertainly, “Is Tori here?”

Jade stands up as he strides in, “She’s not here.”

His eyebrows rise, “Jade?”

“Obviously.”

“What are you doing here?”

“Oh, just watching TV with...um, Trina.” She winces.

“With Trina? You hate Trina.”

“Standing right here,” Trina waves, looking highly offended.

“So?” Jade challenges.

“So...Tori isn’t here?” Beck asks.

“Nope,” Jade answers, and Trina, to her credit, shakes her own head to corroborate.

Beck looks around, confused, as if certain someone is playing a practical joke, and then there’s another knock on the door.

“*That* must be my date. See ya!” Trina struts out without a backwards glance.

Beck watches her leave, looking even more perplexed, then looks back at Jade, “Shouldn’t we...leave too?”

“Nah. It’s okay,” Jade assures him, hoping she can make him leave.

“Well, since Tori’s not here, maybe I can talk to you,” Beck says, folding his arms and regarding her. “Did you tell Tori I’m gay?” he asks.

“I...implied it,” Jade admits.

Beck grits his teeth and sighs, “You shouldn’t have,” he admonishes.

Jade throws up her hands, “I’m sorry. I was just...trying to get information out of her.”

“About her sexuality, you mean,” Beck states.

“Well...yeah.” Jade had nearly forgotten about her previous theory, since she’s seen Tori as a werewolf.

“That’s the thing. She tried to talk to me about it, but she said some *really* weird stuff,” Beck states. “I mean, she said being gay explains my hair, which...sure, I get that. But then she implied that her *whole family* is gay, and then I was just confused. What on earth was she talking about?”

“How should I know?” Jade asks.

Beck studies her. “Did sharing my secret actually get you some information?”

Jade looks away. “Not really.”

Beck is still staring at her, clearly realizing the conversation doesn’t add up somehow, but not knowing what to do about it. Finally, he shrugs. “Okay.”

“Okay then,” Jade prompts, hoping he’ll leave.

“Want to come watch a movie?” Beck asks.

“I...” Jade isn’t sure how to reject this.

“Come on. Trina just abandoned you. And it’s weird to just stay here when no one’s home.” Beck looks around, clearly uncomfortable.

“... Yeah, okay,” Jade agrees, but only because she can’t come up with a good reason why she should be left alone in Tori’s ostensibly empty house.

As they’re leaving, Jade shuts the door behind her. Beck reaches back and jiggles the knob. “You didn’t lock it,” he accuses.

“Oh. Yeah. Better do that,” Jade agrees and watches helplessly as Beck reaches inside to lock the door as they leave.

Now she can’t get back in.

Tori hides upstairs in her bedroom, and listens to everything. She’s disappointed to discover that Beck is not, in fact, a werewolf and cringes at the fact that she may have accidentally outed her entire family as gay. She’s not sure how she’ll play that one off.

She thinks again about how Jade thought that she was gay, and squirms a little. This had fascinated Jade, and Tori isn’t sure how to feel about it.

But mostly, there might be damage control with Beck. And she’s going to have to figure out how to address that.

She trots back downstairs despondently, and plops on one of the couches to watch TV. It’s not the same without Jade there, but she figures she can wait for a bit at least. Maybe Jade will come back.

Tori dozes for a bit, until she hears a knock, and someone trying to open the front door. She dashes over and listens, and a low voice says forcefully, “Tori?”

Tori whines in response, then barks once, softly.

“Can you let me in?” Jade asks.

Tori rears up on her hind legs and tries to maneuver her claws on the lock, but can’t. She barks again, and hears Jade curse in response. Tori sits, not really knowing what to do and hearing that Jade is moving away from the door. She’s feeling despondent until she hears a knock at her back porch door. She runs across the house to the glass door and stares at Jade through it.

Jade stands folding her arms, “Can you open this one?” she asks.

Tori fumbles with the latches, but she can’t quite seem to get it to unlock. Jade stands, looking a bit crestfallen.

“Are you okay in there?” she asks, “Do you need to go outside? I don’t really know...” Tori glares at her, or at least she hopes it reads as a glare, because she’s perfectly capable of using the toilet. Jade holds up her hands, “Okay, well, that’s good at least...”

Tori stands and looks at Jade for a long moment, then barks. Jade stands and stares back inscrutably. Tori begins to move away, then turns back and barks at Jade again, hoping that Jade will know to just *stay there* for a second, because Tori has an idea. Her claws can’t quite maneuver

the latch locks on the glass door, but she's pretty sure she has a stuffed animal in her room with a looped tag that she should be able to use to unlatch the door. So she bounds up the stairs to go get it.

By the time Tori finds it and gets back downstairs, Jade is gone.

She can't help it; Tori howls at the ceiling.

She wishes she didn't feel so...heartbroken.

Crescent

The next day at school, Jade looks around for Tori, but she can't seem to find her. It's frustrating, because Tori hasn't answered her text, either, and a part of her is...well, not worried, exactly. But concerned, maybe.

She somehow doesn't encounter Tori in the halls at all that day, and doesn't see her until they're both in Sikowitz's class in the middle of the day. But Tori is talking animatedly to Cat and Andre and doesn't so much as acknowledge her, even when Jade sits down behind her, kicks her chair, and props her feet up on it, attempting to force Tori to pay attention to her. Instead, Tori rolls her eyes, pushes Jade's feet off her chair and ignores her.

Jade fumes, a little, and spends the class glaring daggers at Tori, willing her to look at her.

Tori is out of the classroom so fast when the bell rings that Jade can't even grab her.

By lunchtime, Tori is the last to arrive at the table, and she sits one person away from Jade—not beside her, and angled so they can't really see each other. Jade can't even glare at her surreptitiously.

And in the middle of lunch, Tori takes a breath. "I have an announcement to make," she says, and Jade's stomach flips nervously. Tori isn't looking at anybody, and she speaks to the table, mostly, "It's kind of weird, but..." Jade's heart is hammering, "My whole family, including me, are... Canadian."

"What?!" Jade exclaims, unable to stop herself. Beside her, she realizes, Beck has relaxed significantly.

Tori looks around Andre to glare at her. "I didn't mean to keep it a secret," she says pointedly, "But I only recently found out."

"It never needs to be a secret," Beck tells her, smiling a little, though he is scrutinizing her a bit.

"Thank you, Beck!"

"But I thought you said you were born—" Cat starts.

"So, Andre," Tori interrupts, "How's that new song you're working on?"

"Oh!" Andre gamely picks up the topic, though Jade almost immediately tunes him out. She's frustrated.

Toward the end of the day, she finally catches Tori at her locker. She doesn't say anything, just grabs the collar of Tori's shirt and starts dragging her away.

"Hey!" Tori cries, though she doesn't struggle much as Jade pushes her into the janitor's closet and follows, shutting the door behind them. "What the hell? Are you *trying* to wazz me off?"

"Why did you lie today at lunch?" Jade asks pointedly.

“I don’t want to talk to you,” Tori folds her arms and looks away.

“What did I ever do to you?”

Tori doesn’t answer, just purses her lips, but finally says, “Thanks for leaving me alone last night.”

Jade sputters for a moment, “I...what?! I didn’t have a *choice*. I couldn’t stay or Beck would’ve gotten suspicious, and he’s too good at reading me.”

Tori glares, “Not then. After that.”

“I...” Jade stares, then rubs her forehead, “At the back door?” As Tori nods stiffly, Jade grits out, “I thought you were saying goodbye to me!”

“What?!”

“When you kept turning and barking at me. I figured that was goodbye! I figured neither of us wanted to stand and stare at each other through a glass door all evening.”

Tori exhales in frustration, but her shoulders have relaxed somewhat, “I was trying to go get something to hopefully unlock the back door,” she explains dully.

“How was I supposed to know that?!” Jade demands.

Tori ignores her query and then reverts to their former topic. “I told them I was Canadian because I heard Beck telling you he was confused about my conversation with him. It was the only thing I could think of to put him at ease so he’ll think I don’t really know his secret, and so that I can preserve my own secrets.”

Jade groans, “I don’t know how I’m ever going to be able to convince him that you’re—wait, secrets *plural*? What else are you hiding?”

Tori rolls her eyes and pushes past Jade. “Goodbye.”

Feeling oddly wounded, Jade lets her.

In spite of Jade’s explanation for leaving that night, Tori still seems upset with her, and remains a bit distant. It frustrates Jade a little, because she’s still fascinated with the whole Tori being a werewolf thing, but she doesn’t have a lot of opportunity to talk about it. She elects not to text Tori continuous questions about it, because she doesn’t want to appear to miss her.

And admittedly, she’s also wondering what other secrets Tori might be hiding. Does it entirely make sense that Tori would assume Beck was a werewolf? It seems insane, to be honest. Jade wonders if Tori *was* trying to tell Beck she was gay, and it just got confusing.

It occurs to her in the middle of the week that Tori’s best friend might be a source of untapped knowledge.

She corners Andre at his locker one morning. “Oh. Hey, Jade,” he greets warily, after flinching when he realizes she’s standing right behind him.

“What can you tell me about Tori’s personal life?”

“Um...what?” To his credit, Andre appears affronted by the question.

“You know. Tori’s inner life.”

“Why are you asking me this?”

“Because I want to know.”

Andre nods uncertainly, as if this answer is in any way an acceptable one. “I don’t know any more than you do,” he tells her.

“I find that hard to believe.” Jade circles him, “You’re her best friend. Surely she shares more with you than with anyone else.”

“Well, um, yeah, that may be true, but she’s Tori, she doesn’t have a lot of secrets...”

“So she has some?”

“Well, um, NO!” Andre finds a break in Jade’s circling and bolts. Jade goes to chase him, but stops after a few steps. It isn’t worth it. Not yet.

For two days, Jade leans on Andre. Subtly, sometimes, when they’re with their friends and she reminds him that he’s a very knowledgeable person whenever he says anything factually true. This seems to make him sweat. She also texts him occasionally, letting him know that she knows he must know something, and she would hate for the Diddy-Bops video to have a resurgence in popularity (not that she’d sabotage herself like that, but it’s a good threat).

Finally, on Friday, she manages to pull Andre into the janitor’s closet, where he breaks.

“Alright! *Alright!*” he cries intensely, then grabs her shoulders, “But you can’t tell *anyone* I told you this!”

She bats his hands off her immediately, “Don’t touch me and you have a deal.”

“Okay,” he backs up and glances nervously at the toilet paper shelf. Jade crosses her arms and waits. He runs his hand anxiously through his hair and starts quietly, “Now, I don’t know anything about this for certain, but...there are a few weird things that have made me wonder.”

“About what, specifically?”

“Let me finish!” Andre sounds desperate, so Jade just holds up her hands in surrender. “So, I mean, she’s Tori, she’s my best friend, and that’s cool and everything. And I’ve just never really asked her about this, but it’s always kinda stuck with me.” He takes a deep breath. “It happened last year when I got a crush on you.”

Jade unsuccessfully stifles a laugh, “What? You had a crush on me?”

“I’m not proud of it,” Andre mutters.

Jade is instantly offended, “Why not?” she asks icily.

“Whoa, hey, it’s not because you’re not like...a great girl. But you were seeing Beck at the time, and I...like I said. Not proud of it.”

She subsides a little, “I get it.”

“So, I told Tori about it. I was freaking out. And she kept telling me I *can’t* have a crush on you, and the reasons why. Lots of well thought-out reasons. And I came over the next day, and she was all *dressed up* as you and acting *just like you*, in an attempt to make me get over my crush.”

Jade listens with her eyebrow steadily climbing higher. “That is...weird.”

Andre nods, “I *know*. She even had a wig for you.”

“Okay, what is up with her wig collection?”

“I wish I knew. I’ve never asked.”

“Okay, so...she has a me costume.”

Andre nods, “Yeah. And she helped me sing the song I wrote for you.”

“Wait, you wrote me a song?”

Andre looks away, his anxiety rising, “It was the only way I could purge my feelings for you! And she sang it right along with me. And...I dunno. She sings all my songs with me, even though they’re for girls, but this time...it felt different somehow.”

“What are you saying?” Jade has an uneasy feeling growing in her chest.

Andre looks over Jade’s shoulder at the window to the closet, then pitches his voice even lower. “What I’m saying is...my thoughts the whole time? Tori has reasons of her own for all these things. Reasons to think over why having a crush on you was wrong. Reasons for having a way to dress up as you. Reasons for singing that song.” He wrings his hands, “It’s just a hunch, but...I haven’t been able to shake the idea that Tori has feelings for you.”

Jade can’t explain the flutter of anxiety she feels. She stares at Andre for a long moment. He looks scared and earnest.

Finally, she says, “That’s it? All you have is a hunch that Tori might...like me?”

Andre’s face falls, “I’ve just told you the biggest secret I have. I’m *sorry* I don’t have any more dirt on my best friend,” he tells her angrily.

Jade glares at him, and he looks in terror toward the toilet paper again. Finally, she huffs, “Whatever. Okay,” and storms out of the janitor’s closet, ignoring his relieved sigh.

If there’s distance between the two girls the next week, it’s because of Jade. Tori seems to have forgiven her for abandoning her on her last wolf night, and in fact, texts her over the weekend to see what she’s up to. Jade ignores the text entirely, and when they see each other in school, Tori looks unmistakably hurt.

Jade feels a surge of sadistic pleasure overriding her guilt.

She can't stop thinking about what Andre told her and her conflicting feelings about the whole thing. She spends most evenings at Beck's or at home working on her latest project, because at least it gets her mind off things. Beck has definitely noticed that Jade is ignoring Tori at school, but he, uncharacteristically, doesn't say anything to Jade about it. He just hangs out with her.

It's when they hang out on Friday that Jade finally tries to process what Andre told her. "Beck," she asks tentatively, "How did you, you know...know?"

Beck glances at her, waits a few moments to see if she'll elaborate, then asks, "How did I know that I'm gay?"

"Yeah," Jade nods.

Beck shrugs, "I just...knew. It's hard to explain, but once I allowed myself to really think about my feelings, they became clear. It was a little hard, especially since they're not feelings I really wanted. I don't think anyone really wants them."

"Was there a specific person that you were into?"

Beck reaches over to pause the movie, "Jade...is this about Tori?"

Jade's jaw tightens, "What? No. Why would you ask that?"

"Because I've seen the way you were with her this week. You've been aggressive to Tori and... semi-friendly to Tori, but you've really never flat-out ignored her before. What happened between you?"

"Nothing happened," Jade says, which is technically true, "Do you just not want to answer my question?"

Beck regards her impassively for a few moments before saying quietly, "Robbie."

"*Robbie?* Oh, come on, no way. You can't go from me to *Robbie*. It's shameful!"

Beck raises his eyebrows impassively. "I'm just saying that's who I've had feelings for. I mean, I don't have a lot of hopes that he's also interested in men, but..."

"Come on," Jade scoffs, "He wears leather pants and male makeup."

"Not all stereotypes are true. You wear Doc Martens and flannel."

"What are you implying?" Jade asks dangerously.

"I'm just saying, as an example, if Robbie is queer for what he wears, you could be, too." Jade mutters that everyone wears these things, but Beck continues gamely on, "Besides, even if he did like men, I think he's too in love with Cat to really consider me seriously." Beck shrugs, "And it's okay. I don't need to date right now."

Jade sighs, "Well, good. Because like I said. You can't downgrade from me to Robbie."

Beck chuckles a little, then turns serious. "So this isn't about Tori at all?"

Jade finds she can't deflect the question easily, "Indirectly. Someone...said something that made me think she might have feelings for me. I'm just wondering if it could be true."

"Could be," Beck says. "You know, I get that she was trying to backtrack on outing herself to me, and maybe she really did out herself by mistake, but when she told me? I wasn't all that surprised."

"Really?"

"Maybe it's gaydar," he says, then looks at her again. "But I wonder why this interests you so much."

"It doesn't," Jade says flatly, reaching around him to restart the movie. It's then that she realizes that it wasn't actually uncharacteristic of Beck not to call her on her treatment of Tori. It's just evidence of how well he knows her; he knew she would bring it up herself.

She considers ignoring him for a week.

On Monday, Tori isn't quite sure how to react when Jade approaches her at her locker.

So she doesn't say anything or acknowledge her in any way, until Jade finally says, "Hey."

Tori turns and raises an eyebrow. "Hey? That's all you have to say?"

Jade folds her arms, "What else should I say?"

Tori sighs, "I guess it was too much to hope for an apology."

"Sorry," Jade grits out, looking away. "I was dealing with some stuff."

Tori's anger evaporates, "Why didn't you say so? I wouldn't have taken it so personally."

Jade shrugs and doesn't answer. It's clear she doesn't want to talk about it.

"So you weren't like...freaked out by me?" Tori glances around to make sure no one's really paying attention.

"No."

"Good. Okay. Good."

There's another awkward pause, and then Jade just walks away. Tori lets her. Her mood has lifted, and she isn't keen to push what is clearly an awkward interaction for them both.

It's not like it was a *bad* thing to spend the past week hanging out with Andre and Cat more than Jade. But she'd missed spending time with Jade. It was stupid, she thought, because they'd really barely hung out one on one. But Tori had come to really enjoy her company. Even if Jade *did* have the tendency to treat her like a household pet...she finds she doesn't mind it, all that much.

She's glad it appears that Jade isn't angry with her. She'd been terrified that Jade had changed her mind and become disturbed by the fact that she's a werewolf. She elects to let Jade decide when

they might spend time together again. She doesn't think she could stand having another text go unanswered.

But as the week goes on and Jade seems normal enough in school, but they still haven't hung out together, Tori starts to wonder. Maybe she's making a bigger deal out of this than she should. Maybe she's become too invested in the idea of her and Jade getting close.

Maybe Jade is only interested in her when she's a werewolf, and it's not about Tori at all, it's about Jade's fascination with the bizarre.

Maybe *that's* why Jade hasn't wanted to hang out for the past two weeks.

Jade doesn't quite realize that she's losing track of time until she tries to book the black box theater through Sikowitz. She's been working hard on her performance piece the past two weeks, because it's been a good distraction from thinking about...everything else in her life. Sikowitz has an opening in two weeks. Jade tries to figure out if she can have everything ready by then, and decides she'll just have to make it work.

She's been working with Cat on the project. It seems to be turning into a sort of short play that's a modern retelling of Faustus, with a woman striking a deal with the devil in exchange for bearing the devil's child. Cat thinks the play is very weird. Jade had wanted to play the devil herself, but as he has fewer lines, she ends up making Cat play him, and Jade plays the woman.

She's had to scrap a few ideas, unfortunately, including the planned orgy scene. But she thinks she can get away with it by projecting some sensual images onto a screen during a scene change to convey the idea.

Every day as school ends, she finds herself either reminding Cat that they're getting together in the evening, or Cat asks her when they're meeting. Toward the end of the week, they're staying late at school to start working with some of the sets that Sinjin and Burf have been working on. They've made a remarkable amount of progress in a few days. Jade supposes that's one perk of having people be so afraid of her; they'll do what she says, and quickly.

The piece is coming together slowly. The woman Jade plays is in despair; she has no one to love. So she eventually calls upon the devil to bring her love. The devil agrees to do so in exchange for her firstborn, the devil impregnates her through a magic ritual. The play ends with the devil leaving with the baby and telling the woman that it's the only creature that could ever love her unconditionally, and so she has ruined her chances of finding love. The woman, in despair, becomes a cat. Jade still has to put together the sensual images to represent the orgy that summons the devil, but with Cat and her mostly memorizing their lines, it is coming together.

After a scene in which Sinjin has absolutely ruined the lighting, Jade yells at him and then storms off to the bathroom to cool off. When she walks back out, Tori is standing there.

"Oh. Hey," she says, a little surprised.

"Hey," Tori answers dully.

"How did you know I was here?"

Tori shrugs, "I could hear you."

"Where were you?" Jade asks, confused.

"The student lounge. Working on a new song with Andre. His grandma was driving him nuts, so we stayed here."

"And...you could hear me? From there?"

Tori points to her ears, "They're good," she explains. She looks away, a little sheepishly. "I could smell you, too."

Jade tries not to look affronted, even though it's a little strange. "Oh."

Tori regards her for a long while. "So, what is Cat? A vampire?"

"What?" Jade asks, completely thrown off.

"I figured she must be something supernatural, the way you've suddenly become fascinated with her."

Jade stares at her for a long moment, "Are you...jealous?" she asks incredulously.

"No," Tori grumbles unconvincingly.

Jade sighs. This is why she is sometimes not convinced that friends are worth the trouble. "I'm spending a lot of time with Cat because we're working on a project together. I would *like* to spend more time with you, but only if you stop being a baby about everything."

Tori's face brightens a little. "You do?"

"Yeah. Sure." Faced with Tori, Jade concedes that she actually has kind of missed her these past few weeks.

"How about this weekend?" Tori asks.

"I...can't," Jade answers, and Tori immediately appears crestfallen. "I still have a lot of work to get through with Cat."

"It's okay," Tori tries to brush it off sullenly.

"Wait," Jade says, "Maybe I could find some time Sunday. Lunch? I'll take you to Nozu."

"Yeah?" Tori asks, her face brightening.

"Sure," Jade replies, wondering if she can really spare the time. But something about Tori looking so sad really got to her.

"Okay," Tori answers, then glances down the hall. "I'd better get back. It sounds like Andre is about to come looking for me."

Jade glances down the hall, but of course, she can't hear anything. "Me, too. I've left Cat alone with Sinjin and Burf. Nothing good can come of that."

Tori chuckles and begins to stride away. “Sunday?” she calls, as if checking that it’s real.

“Don’t act so excited, or I’ll cancel just to make you sad,” Jade calls back snidely.

Tori grins.

Gibbous

Tori gets a text from Jade on Saturday night, telling her to be ready at noon to go to Nozu. On a Sunday, Tori can easily sleep in until then if she's allowed, but she makes sure to wake up early so she has time to get presentable before Jade arrives to pick her up.

It occurs to her that Jade picking her up, and therefore driving around during the day, is actually a pretty remarkable favor from Jade. She begins to wonder if Jade has some kind of ulterior motive here. Almost nothing good comes of Jade doing her a favor of her own volition, after all.

Jade arrives a little after noon, looking a little surly with sunglasses on when Tori answers the door. She doesn't say much as they walk out to her car and she begins to drive them to Nozu. After several silent minutes, Jade says, "Sorry. I was up late and I haven't had enough coffee yet. You can talk to me."

"Okay," Tori answers tentatively, and they talk about Sikowitz's recent slew of drive-by acting exercises as they head to Nozu.

It's only when they take their favorite seats at the Nozu bar that Tori realizes that she's only been here with Jade alone once: on the "date" Sikowitz made them attend.

She glances at Jade, sitting to her left, as she realizes she's making an effort to drink her Miso soup quietly. Jade had finished her travel mug of coffee on the drive and seems to be mostly awake, and they had been talking about school until their soups arrived. Now, Tori feels abruptly awkward. Like she's on a date but didn't know she was on a date.

But that's stupid. She and Jade have hung out alone several times now and it's never been date-like. Just because this is a restaurant shouldn't change anything. Just because it's a restaurant they've been on a forced, arranged date in doesn't change anything.

But as Jade starts to ask her questions about herself (really, still mostly about being a werewolf), the strange feeling grows.

"So, is it hard? Hiding who you are?" Jade asks her. Because they're in public, neither of them have actually used the word werewolf, and Tori almost wants to check that it's lycanthropy that Jade is talking about.

"I mean, sort of. But lots of people wouldn't understand. It scares people, and some people don't think people like me exist. It's better to stay hidden, honestly."

Jade nods thoughtfully. "Are there..." she lowers her voice, "Poachers?"

"I've never actually heard of a real one. I think those don't actually exist. They're more of a Hollywood invention."

"So no one would try to hunt you down for your...uh...hair?"

Tori stares at her in horror. "Ew. No. Besides, from what I understand, we do change back to human form if we die."

Jade looks interested, “What if you were skinned alive?”

“Jade!”

“I’m just curious!”

Tori’s lip curls. “I mean, I think then you would actually get fur but...yuck.”

“Agreed.” Jade regards her with an appraising eye, “Though your, um, hair is really very nice.”

“Thank you,” Tori’s belly flutters for a moment. An unsolicited compliment from Jade might be some kind of cosmic reward.

Jade shrugs, “Whatever. What if you had pet allergies?”

“I don’t?”

“But would that be possible? To basically be allergic to yourself?”

“I...suppose?”

“Interesting.”

Their sushi arrives, and conversation slows for a bit as they savor the first several bites of their respective rolls.

“Do you like cats?” Jade asks eventually.

“Cat? Sure, of course I do!”

“No, I said cats.”

“Oh. Yeah, they’re alright. I guess I prefer dogs.”

“What would happen if you owned a dog?”

“We’d probably have a really great time together once a month?”

“So they’re not scared of you?”

“No. As I think you’ve noted, they seem to like me quite a bit.”

Jade laughs, “I do remember.”

“What about you? Cats or dogs?” Tori feels like she finally has a way to steer the conversation back toward Jade.

Jade shrugs, “I was never allowed to have pets. I kind of wanted one of each. But I feel like I’m probably not caring enough to take care of a dog.”

“I don’t know about that,” Tori says thoughtfully. She’s thinking mostly of the ways Jade tends to look after Cat, in her own roundabout sort of way. But also the times that she’s clearly been concerned for Tori’s wellbeing.

Jade shrugs, “I don’t have a lot of maternal instincts. But I’m not all that concerned about it.”

“That’s...not shocking.”

“Thanks,” Jade glares at her, but it’s playful.

“You take care of Cat, though.”

“I guess.” Jade pushes her empty plate away, “Speaking of which, I need to get together with her to work on our project.”

“Oh. Yeah, I understand,” Tori is disappointed, but tries not to show it. The waiter drops off the check, and Jade snatches it up and pays it before Tori has a chance to object.

“Hey!” Tori says as the check disappears, “You paid the check.”

“Yeah, so?” Jade asks.

There’s that weird feeling again, that date-like feeling. “Nothing. I’ve got the next time.”

“You want there to be a next time?” Jade asks in surprise.

“Well, yeah.”

“Why? I was grumpy, I asked you a bunch of invasive and gross questions, and I’m ducking out early to go meet up with someone else.”

Tori considers this, but in spite of these factors, she’d actually had a good time. “Because I like spending time with you?”

“There is something wrong with you.”

Tori shrugs, “It’s just nice to be around someone who isn’t afraid of me.”

Jade meets her eyes as she says this, looking strangely vulnerable. “You know what? It really is.”

Tori’s stomach flutters again.

Jade goes to Cat’s after dropping Tori off at home. She’d spent most of her night designing the sensual scene that will be projected onto the stage to represent the summoning of the devil, and she wants to show Cat. She basically trawled through public domain video footage for images until she found enough that she could splice them together with some soft sounds into something unsettling, yet vaguely sexy without being pornographic.

They’re sitting together on Cat’s bed, both watching the video on Jade’s laptop. Cat’s eyes are wide through the whole thing.

“Well?” Jade asks.

“Whoa,” Cat says. She turns to scrutinize Jade, “Are you trying to tell me something?”

Jade scowls, “What do you mean? I’m just showing you the video I made for the show. It’s not supposed to tell you anything, it’s supposed to represent the ritual to summon the devil.”

“Uh huh,” Cat sounds unconvinced.

“*What*, Cat?” Jade asks sharply.

Cat shrugs, “It’s just...your play is really gay, Jade.”

“*Excuse* me?” Jade asks, affronted.

“I mean, you have this female devil impregnating this woman, which okay, that doesn’t have to be gay, but then you have this video that is basically lesbian porn that is used to summon her and... Jade, if you’re gay, you can tell me.”

“Okay, first of all, no. Second, the devil is only female because I wanted to play him until we had to switch roles, and it’s fine because your red hair works for the part. Third, this isn’t lesbian porn, it’s based on those old rumors that groups of women would summon the devil by having orgies and suckling toads or whatever else about female anatomy and sexuality used to scare men back in the colonial days. It’s historical!”

“Okay, *sure*,” Cat still sounds unconvinced. Jade fumes, but she knows it’s not worth arguing with Cat about. Once she makes up her mind, she’s hard to sway.

“I’m not gay, Cat, but if this is too weird for you, then fine, you can quit.”

“No, I’m fine,” Cat answers, “The play isn’t any weirder than your other ones. It’s kind of cool. It’s just really sad. I mean, your character doesn’t get any happiness in the end.”

“No one really does in real life, either,” Jade grumbles.

“That’s just sad,” Cat frowns.

“Most things are.”

It’s Tech Week, sort of, so Jade and Cat are practicing after school every day with Sinjin and Burf. Next Monday had been the only day Sikowitz had open for Jade to use, so they get one night, one performance, and they’re practicing all week.

When she leaves school on Thursday night, it’s getting dark, and she notices the moon rising. With a flutter of excitement, she realizes the moon is almost full.

She texts Tori when she gets home.

Almost full moon?

There’s a pretty quick response.

Yes? Why do you ask?

Jade chews her lip, debating how she wants to play this.

Just curious what you're up to is all

I'm not sure yet

It's a fair answer, but not what Jade had hoped for. She tosses her phone aside and immerses herself in the video footage she showed Cat. It's *not* gay. It's just sensual. She feels like this should be obvious. She tweaks it a little, makes it a little longer, adds more sound effects and more soft focus images of flesh. She'll show Cat how sensual it can get.

She realizes it's been about an hour when she catches herself staring at her PearPhone absently. She picks it up, and sees messages from Tori, all sent within a few minutes of each other.

Did you want to come over?

It's okay if you don't.

Just thought it might be fun.

She grins wryly. She can sense Tori's anxiety, and she likes it, though at the same time, she wishes she'd seen the messages earlier.

Yes.

She always enjoys giving someone very little to work with after they've been squirming for a good hour.

Really? Okay. Afternoon on Saturday?

Already, Jade is looking forward to it.

Jade spends early Saturday afternoon rehearsing with Cat. Spending time with Sinjin and Burf on the weekend is absolutely out of the question, so they rehearse at Cat's grandma's house, just lines, without props. She shows Cat her improved summoning projection of images, and Cat merely raises her eyebrows, but doesn't say anything.

After a quick trip to Inside-Out Burger (Cat had offered to pay, so it was hard to turn down), Jade is heading to Tori's. It's getting late in the afternoon, but it's not sundown yet, so Tori is fully human when she answers Jade's knock on the door.

She grins a bit, "Hey," she greets, stepping aside to let Jade in. Jade strides in and stands, looking around. Tori watches for a moment before saying, with a hint of teasing, "I don't know why I ever invite you in. You always walk into a place like you own it."

Jade turns, "To be fair, you didn't invite me in. You just stood aside and let me claim the room."

Tori's smirking a little now. "I guess it's a good thing I'm not that territorial."

"Good, because it would be pretty gross if you were peeing all over your own house."

Tori's mouth drops open in offense, but then she laughs. "I really shouldn't find these sorts of things so funny. From anyone else they'd be pretty offensive."

"Who else could even discuss this with you, seriously or not?" Jade challenges.

"True," Tori concedes, "I guess it's my fault for entrusting you with my secret."

"It's your fault with entrusting me with knowing *anything* about you."

Tori looks a little more serious now, "I really have rarely confided in you," she points out, "Most of what you know about me, you found out yourself."

Jade shrugs, "I'm thorough about things that interest me."

"I...interest you?"

"I've had ulterior motives for my interest for the most part."

Tori chuckles a little, and it fades as she remembers some of the ways Jade has tried to use information against her. The awkward silence stretches for a moment, until Tori says, "Should we go upstairs?"

Jade glances at the TV in the living room, then says, "Sure?"

Tori nods, and they head upstairs to her bedroom. Jade sits on Tori's bed, and Tori stands and turns on the TV, flipping channels. "What do you want to watch?"

"Whatever you want," Jade answers easily. When Tori looks at her in surprise, she clarifies, "I can change it to whatever I want when you can't stop me anyway."

“So not fair,” Tori sighs, choosing an old rerun of *I Married My Mom*. She glances at Jade, then moves to tentatively sit next to her. Jade has an urge to push Tori off the bed, but she resists the urge halfway through, and it turns into a playful shove. Tori shoves back automatically, and they both adjust themselves comfortably on the bed.

“This show is awful,” Jade gripes.

“Hey! It’s a classic,” Tori defends.

“It’s *lame*. You’d think this guy would be more upset about marrying his mom, but everything’s happy all the time.”

“Well, that’s the joy of a sitcom. No matter what happens, nothing really changes, and things have a happy ending. It can be nice, when life itself is so uncertain.”

“I guess. But I guess I don’t believe in lying to people. Why give people a false idea about life?”

“Most people know the difference between fiction and reality. I don’t see the harm in giving people an escape every once in a while.”

“Foolishness,” Jade grumbles, but even she has to admit that the show is pulling her in a little bit. It has a quirky, bizarre sense of humor for such an old show.

An alarm on Tori’s PearPhone goes off before too much longer, and she pulls out her phone, grimacing. “Guess it’s almost time,” she mutters.

“Should I...leave?” Jade asks.

“Nah,” Tori says, “I’ll just go into the bathroom.” She moves to the door of the adjoining bathroom she shares with Trina. For all the time Jade had spent snooping through Tori’s room that one afternoon, she hadn’t dared to go into the bathroom. A shared space with Trina was horrifying.

“Okay,” Jade agrees, picking up the remote to threaten to change the channel. Tori narrows her eyes challengingly at Jade as she shuts the door. “I’m leaving it on this channel because I want to!” Jade calls after her, setting back down the remote. She won’t admit it aloud, but she wants to see how this episode ends.

It’s a few minutes before she hears some sounds coming from the bathroom. Soft sounds, mostly, little breathy sounds, dull cracks and little thumps. Jade turns down the TV in fascination, but the sounds are quickly gone, and then there’s a few minutes of silence.

Then, Jade hears a light scratch on the bathroom door. She smirks a little. “What’s that I hear?” she announces loudly, “How odd!”

A gruff bark is her answer, which trails off into a low growl. She gets up and opens the door for Tori, who trots in, tail low.

“Relax,” Jade laughs, “I wouldn’t leave you stranded.”

Tori tosses her head, then shakes her whole body. Then she sits and regards Jade with her whole attention, her tail wagging.

“Do you...want to go outside?” Jade asks uncertainly.

In answer, Tori leaps up onto the bed. Jade sits next to her. It should be odd, she thinks, since last time they were on separate couches. But it's not. Tori sits right next to her, watching the TV, and huffing what sounds like laughter every few moments.

After another episode of *I Married My Mom*, Jade announces, "I'm bored," and reaches for the remote.

Tori lunges for her, and for a split second, Jade is frightened, and imagines Tori's sharp teeth at her throat. But Tori's attack is more licks than bites, though she does close her teeth very gently around the wrist holding the remote.

"Oh, please," Jade grumbles, passing the remote to her other hand. Tori lets go, and lunges again, bearing Jade down onto the bed. Jade twists so that she's on her stomach and just begins to flip channels, while Tori climbs on her back, noses at her sides, tries to reach the remote Jade holds stretched out of reach.

Tori could just get down off the bed to get to the remote, Jade reflects. But she doesn't. She continues climbing on Jade, trying in vain to reach it. Jade laughs and keeps flipping channels and is surprised to find a Hitchcock marathon going on. She stops there, excited, and puts the remote down. Tori gazes at the TV uncertainly and whimpers once.

"Oh, stop," Jade admonishes, "Hitchcock isn't that scary." At least, he isn't to Jade, because she'd seen most of his films before age ten and was immune to their effects.

They're both absorbed by the first few movies—the last half of *Psycho* followed by *Vertigo*—but *I Confess* is next and they seem to be going backwards in time and in quality, because it's followed by *Spellbound*, which before Jade knows it, is beginning to put her to sleep. She's turned now so that she's on her side, her head on Tori's pillow. Tori is still sitting behind her, and her head is starting to droop.

"Lie down," Jade tells her, without thinking about it much. Tori's head lifts quickly, and she regards Jade uncertainly for a moment. Jade pats the bed in front of her, scooting back, and Tori steps lightly over to curl up in front of Jade. Jade breathes in, thinking absently how she always wanted a warm creature to snuggle with at night, but how she always moved away from Beck in the night when she would stay over. She snakes an arm around Tori, and before too long, they're both drifting off to Gregory Peck and Ingrid Bergman's soft voices.

Tori wakes up in the early morning. Everything is soft around her, but she's chilly. She moves slightly, trying to find the blankets to pull back over her, but her hand prods something soft.

Very soft.

Tori's head jerks up as she realizes she's just accidentally fondled the sleeping Jade's breast. Her head was nestled against Jade's other breast.

A second later, Tori realizes she's naked.

She practically falls off the bed in panic, realizing that she's been sleeping naked on top of Jade since turning back into a human.

“Oh, chiz, oh, chiz,” she mutters under her breath a few times, trying to figure out what to do. She flings herself across the room and opens her dresser drawer as silently as she can, pulling out a non-matching tank top and pajama pants and slipping into the bathroom to throw on the clothes. She takes several deep breaths to calm down, then steps back out quietly. She peeks at the bed. Jade appears to be still asleep. Immensely grateful for her own reflexes and stealth, Tori moves quietly back to the bed, lifting the sheets and sliding in next to Jade.

She lies, feeling her heart rate slow as she relaxes enough to get sleepy again, when Jade shifts in her sleep, moving to wrap an arm around Tori.

Abruptly, Tori’s heart is pounding again. As warm and comfortable as she is, it takes a long time for her to fall back to sleep.

A few hours later, Tori wakes up again, but at least this time, she feels like she’s had a chance to sleep in a bit. She moves carefully, so as not to wake Jade, but when she catches a glimpse of Jade, her eyes are open, and she’s holding her PearPhone. She looks at Tori expressionlessly.

“Good morning,” Tori offers, her voice rough. Jade nods, taciturn. “I’ll get you a coffee,” Tori decides, and moves quickly out of her room and downstairs. She brews a K-Cup and makes some toast, then brings it back upstairs. Jade accepts the cup of coffee gratefully, sipping long and with relish.

They’re halfway through munching on their toast when Tori feels it’s safe to ask, “How did you sleep?”

Jade shrugs, and washes down her bite of toast with some coffee. “Alright,” she answers, then lowers her gaze. “It’s not every day I wake up with a naked woman on top of me.”

“Oh, my god,” Tori buries her face in her hands, “I thought you were asleep!” she cries.

“Nope,” Jade informs her dryly.

“I’ve seen you sleep through a warzone! How on earth did I wake you?”

“Despite what you may think, it’s pretty noticeable when the person sleeping on top of you starts changing shape. I woke up midway through your transformation.”

Tori’s eyes bulge, “You...*saw* me change back?”

“Yeah.”

She feels abruptly exposed, “I...I’m sorry.”

“Why?”

“Because it’s not...very attractive.”

“Who cares? It was cool.”

Tori warms a little, because Jade’s assessment of one of the most uncomfortable parts of being a werewolf is oddly reassuring. “Still. I’m, um, sorry if it was awkward for you.”

“It was funny more than anything. Watching you leap off the bed in horror and everything.”

“You were awake for that too?!” Tori intones mournfully.

Jade eyes her cup of coffee, “Hrm. I wasn’t planning to tell you any of this, really. I should have waited until I finished this to talk.”

“I’m sorry,” Tori says again.

“Why do you keep apologizing?”

“I don’t know. I just feel like I owe you one.”

Jade eyes her. “It’s fine. If I were uncomfortable, I would have left.”

It’s then that Tori fully remembers Jade moving to spoon her, and realizes that Jade was very likely still awake for that. “But instead you stayed to cuddle?” she asks pointedly.

Jade looks at her toast and changes the subject, “You know,” she replies, with a slightly nervous air, “When you told me you were a werewolf, I thought you were going to tell me you were gay.”

“And?”

“Are you?”

Tori’s pulse flutters noticeably in her chest and in her neck. “I mean, I guess? I like girls. But it just never seemed that important or like something I needed to hide that much. Not like being a werewolf.” Jade’s breath seems to come out in a rush at Tori’s pronouncement and she sets down her coffee mug. Tori watches her carefully for her reaction. “Is that weird to hear?” she finally asks.

“I guess not. It just answers some questions I’ve had.”

“Why were you wondering?”

Jade’s arms are folded now. “It seemed important,” she mutters.

“Okay. I...didn’t mean to keep you in the dark. I just didn’t think it would interest you.”

“Please,” Jade’s gaze is direct now, “Everything about you interests me.”

“Oh,” is all Tori can think of to say. Her heart is pounding. She can feel the rush of adrenaline down her limbs from Jade’s words. She steels herself and asks, “Are you...gay?”

There’s a moment when Tori is already cringing, already prepared for the inevitable denial, the subsequent jeers. And then Jade says, “No,” and Tori feels like she’s shattering, like every moment that has built up to this has meant nothing and she’s been wrong and foolish and too damn hopeful. And then Jade’s eyes drop and she says, “But I’m not straight, either,” very, very quietly.

“Oh,” Tori says, very softly, and finds she has to sit down. She sinks into her computer desk chair.

“Yeah, *oh*,” Jade replies dryly, her gaze slowly rising to meet Tori’s.

“So what does this mean?” Tori asks.

Jade shrugs, "It's means...whatever we want it to mean."

"So there is a 'we' here?"

"If I'm...understanding things correctly, yes."

Tori worries that she's somehow misinterpreting everything, herself. "We are talking about...*liking* each other, aren't we?"

Jade sighs heavily, "As loathe as I am to admit it, yes."

"Oh, please," Tori says, "If you didn't *like* liking me, you'd have left."

"Whatever. Point is, I don't know what this means, or what to do with it."

"Well. We can see where things go. You know. Date, or whatever."

Jade laughs, "Date?"

"It's not like we haven't done it," Tori points out.

Jade relaxes, "True. It's...not that different than what we have been doing. Only now I guess I can touch you when you're a human, too."

"You...want to touch me?"

In answer, Jade stands and crosses the room, reaching out to stroke Tori's hair. Tori finds herself leaning toward Jade's hand, hungry for contact. They so rarely touch, really, except for some hugs, some coerced, most genuine and strange. Tori's always wanted more, always craved contact, never fully accepting why.

Tori reaches out thoughtlessly to clasp Jade's fingers in her own. The hand on her hair freezes for a moment, then Jade entwines their fingers and continues to run her hands shakily through Tori's hair. Dimly, Tori wonders if hair is a thing for Jade. Her ex-boyfriend certainly had great hair.

Moments later, Tori's moving upward, trying to close the distance between them. Jade practically pulls her to her feet, and they're kissing. Tori's pulse is like a living creature racing through her body, alive and powerful. She can hear the slight intake of breath from Jade when their lips meet, can feel the way her body tightens with nerves and pleasure. She can smell her body, the soft smell of sleepy warmth. She can smell the coffee on her breath, even though Jade's mouth stays closed.

The kiss breaks, and Jade's cheeks are flushed, her breathing heavy. Her expression is unreadable, until it turns hungry for a split second and she's drawing Tori suddenly to her again, pulling her into another kiss.

They spend what's left of the morning kissing, while Tori makes Jade another cup of coffee and cartoons play in the background. It's nearing noon when Jade grimaces and finally says, "I have to get going. I should go home and get a shower before I meet Cat for rehearsal."

"Oh, yeah. Okay."

"I'll be back later?" Jade asks.

“Here? Sure. I’ll be here,” Tori grins.

“Don’t smile so much. You look like an idiot.”

“An idiot that you *like*.”

“Stop.”

“Okay.” Tori arranges her face into an exaggerated sneer.

“Idiot,” Jade says again, affectionately this time, as she leaves.

Jade feels somewhat like the last few hours of her life haven’t been real as she heads home and mechanically showers. It’s when she’s on her way to Cat’s that she ends up having to pull over down a side street and just sit for a moment, because her mind is just spinning.

It is frightening how easy it was to admit her feelings for Tori. But Tori has never been someone who was content to let Jade hide, and, Jade realizes, she’s never let Tori hide, either. She was only one who saw through Tori’s act when she’d changed so suddenly before the Platinum Music Awards. Jade didn’t have a lot of reasons to hide in life, but it was Tori who always saw her at her most vulnerable, her most authentic.

There was give and take in her relationship with Tori, push and pull. More so than there ever was with passive, chill Beck. She had loved him because it was easy, but this thing with Tori...she was compelled by it because it *wasn’t* easy. For more reasons than just their genders, and Jade realizing that this capacity to be attracted to women *is* a part of her.

She thinks again about Cat calling her play gay, and wants to laugh and cry at once.

Rehearsal with Cat goes okay. Cat keeps asking her if she’s alright, because she’s absolutely preoccupied with thoughts of Tori. She feels less interested in the performance piece in general, though she’s still proud of the sensual scene she’s put together. Though now watching it makes her feel exposed.

By the time they finish and she’s heading back to Tori’s, she’s excited and nervous.

There’s still some time before Tori will have to change, so she’s human as she excitedly ushers Jade inside and immediately upstairs. She’s wearing sweatpants and a tank top and her glasses and she looks so stupidly adorable that it almost annoys Jade.

They’ve already been kissing against Tori’s bedroom door for about a minute before Jade regains the ability to communicate. “Can we talk a moment? You know, while you still can?” Jade asks breathily.

“I won’t be able to kiss for much longer either,” Tori answers, staring at Jade’s lips. But she takes a step back, giving Jade some space, watching her expectantly.

Jade tries to gather her thoughts. She starts, “This is new. And terrifying. And while I think I always knew I could be attracted to women, I didn’t *know*, you know?” Tori nods, and Jade continues, “And I think, just for now, I just want to keep it between us. While I figure out how to handle this.”

Something in Tori's posture seems to droop, like when a dog lowers its ears. But she nods, "I understand. I'm not sure I'm ready for people to know, either."

Jade watches her for a moment, and with that response, there's no reason for Tori to seem as... disappointed as she does. So she asks, "What's bothering you?" while she moves to sit on Tori's bed, watching her.

Tori actually wrings her hands for a moment, but then she looks at Jade, "Are you...are you actually into *me*? Or is this just like a...novelty for you. Being able to date a werewolf."

Jade stares for a moment, because it's actually a good question. She wants to be offended but she knows that this might be something she would do. But she answers, "Both."

"What?"

"I like you. I really do. And the fact that you're a werewolf just makes this even cooler. Think about it. Trina's a werewolf, too, but I'd never date her."

"Well, no. No one should," Tori mutters.

"It's *you* I'm interested in dating, first and foremost. Besides, you're you a lot more than you're a wolf."

"That's true," Tori answers, sitting next to Jade.

"But I guess you'll just have to see. If I'm only your girlfriend during the full moon, I think you should worry that I have a bestiality fetish or something, but at least then you'd know what I'm really interested in. But I won't be."

Tori looks horrified, "Oh my god."

Jade's horribly conscious of the fact that she's just used the word girlfriend, but Tori doesn't seem to find it as significant. Maybe she had already made the connection, but to Jade, it feels abruptly brand new, and an excited rush of adrenaline courses through her with the realization. She kisses Tori, while she's still clearly in the middle of horrible bestiality thoughts, and within minutes they're practically wrestling on Tori's bed, making out.

Until a shudder runs through Tori's body. Her eyes fly open, and already her pupils look bigger than they should. "Oh, chiz," Tori gasps, her voice scratchy. She starts to rise, and Jade moves to let her get up. "I've got to change," Tori says. Her spine undulates weirdly for a moment, and then she's hurrying into the bathroom, closing the door firmly behind her.

Jade reflects that yes, it's completely awesome to have a werewolf girlfriend, until it cock blocks you. Not that she's remotely ready to consider sex with a woman yet. But her body still aches to be kissed more. She wasn't nearly finished making out.

A few moments later, there's that little scratch on the bathroom door, and Jade rises to let Tori back into the room. Tori's tail and ears are low, like she's embarrassed, so Jade gets down on her knees and gives Tori a hearty scratch behind the ears, until her tail starts wagging. "You have nothing to feel bad about," she tells her, "Now, let's watch something. I brought some DVDs from home. If you're going to be my girlfriend, there are some movies you're required to watch."

Now Tori looks nervous again. But she joins Jade on the bed, and Jade snuggles her happily while they watch horrifying movies that make Tori hide her eyes.

Waxing

Jade doesn't necessarily plan on spending the night at Tori's, especially since it's a school night. But it just happens that way. They fall asleep together—though this time, Tori at least snuggles under a blanket so that when she wakes up at dawn as a naked human, she can wrap it around herself and get dressed before joining Jade for a little bit more sleep.

Tori's parents seem exhausted at the breakfast table that morning, but they don't seem all that surprised to see Jade there. Jade realizes with a hint of anxiety that they probably smelled her presence, maybe even heard her and Tori talking. Trina does not appear happy to see Jade at the table, but she does appear surprised, which relieves Jade a little; at least Trina probably didn't hear anything.

They're a little late to school, because Trina takes forever to shower, leaving her and Tori little time to get ready, which means it's kind of conspicuous when they walk into their first class late together. But no one really says much. Beck shoots Jade a curious look, but she ignores him. Jade is glad that she always keeps a change of clothes in her car, because she knows there's no way she could inconspicuously borrow any of Tori's clothes. Even if Tori *does* have a costume of her, like Andre claims.

After getting to school, though, Jade's focus and worry shifts to her performance, which is tonight. She and Cat will be practicing after school with Sinjin and Burf and then just staying until showtime that evening. When she's not paying attention in class, Jade is thinking about the show, her lines, hoping everything will fit together the way she thinks it will.

When school ends, Jade visits her locker and Tori approaches. "Hey," she grins.

"Hey," Jade replies. She tries to keep her expression relatively blank. Low key, she thinks.

"So, I was thinking it might be a good idea for me to go to the park tonight," Tori says conversationally, "I need at least one night to run around or I kind of go nuts," she laughs.

A wave of horrible realization hits Jade, "Oh *fuck!*" she shouts. It's enough to make nearby people start walking away quickly. She slams her locker shut, and they start running.

"What?" Tori asks, looking worried and hurt all at once.

Jade takes several deep breaths, surprised to find that she's near tears. "My performance. It's tonight."

"Tonight?" Tori asks, "It's happening already?"

"Yeah. Tonight, and only tonight. And it's the full fucking moon. I wasn't even thinking about it."

"Oh, no," Tori looks devastated. "I had no idea."

"I can't believe I forgot to tell you," Jade mutters.

"I wish I could..." Tori shakes her head. Jade understands. She knows Tori doesn't like to take wolfsbane much, and if she takes it tonight, on a night where she *needs* to run around...it might not

be pretty.

“I get it,” Jade says tersely, “I think Sinjin’s recording it. I can show you another time.”

“Okay,” Tori answers sadly, “I’m really sorry,” she says quietly.

“It’s okay,” Jade sighs, arms folded tightly, “I know you can’t help it. Any other night, I’d be glad to go to the park with you, by the way.”

“I know,” Tori smiles. She hesitates, “I guess I’ll see you tomorrow?”

“Yeah. See you tomorrow.”

“Break a leg.”

“Thanks.”

Jade watches Tori leave, feeling like screaming the whole time.

Although she’s still upset that Tori won’t be there, Jade manages to get herself into the right mindset quickly. Their last rehearsal goes well. Cat seems excited, and Sinjin and Burf seem nervous, like they usually are when they work with her. Everything is as it should be.

They stay backstage as the little audience fills up. Cat bounces, and Jade paces. Both are relatively quiet, though, mentally preparing themselves.

It’s when the lights go down to signify that the show is just about to begin that something so jarring happens, that Jade is thrown completely out of her element.

There’s a shout from the audience as the last whispers die down, “Woo! Break a leg, Jade! And Cat!”

It’s Tori’s voice. But it can’t be.

Cat giggles, “Tori doesn’t know it’s time to be quiet,” she whispers. Jade feels frozen. Cat looks at her, concerned. “Jade?” she whispers, “It’s time to take the stage.”

“I...I know,” Jade shakes it off. “I’m ready,” she says, then strides out to take the stage for her opening monologue.

She’s gone over the monologue so many times that she really doesn’t have to think about it. She just performs, a distraught woman with nothing left, ready to resort to summoning the devil just to be happy for once. And during the performance it’s relatively easy to let her eyes wander through the crowd.

Despite the spotlight illuminating her, blocking her vision, it’s light enough in the audience that she can see most people. And there’s Tori, right in the front row, her leg jiggling, sitting on the edge of her seat, staring at Jade with rapt attention.

The curtain closes after Jade’s monologue so that the sensual projected images she created have something to play over. Jade practically runs backstage to Cat. She has an idea and she’s not about

to second-guess it.

“Cat,” she whispers harshly, “We need to change the ending.”

“What?” Cat hisses, “What are you talking about?”

Jade explains. She doesn’t have much time, but she tells Cat what must change. She thinks about how much trouble she’s had with the piece these past few days. Though she knows that being happy right now, in the moment, doesn’t mean that life is any less meaningless and tragic, she feels like she can’t rightfully tell a tragedy when her heart wants a love story.

And besides. Tori will probably hate the first ending to this play.

Jade and Cat take the stage, the woman makes her deal with the devil. She endures nine months of pregnancy, and when it comes time to give birth, instead of being alone, the devil is there, talking her through it. They welcome the baby together. And instead of leaving the woman alone, loveless, the devil tells her, “I can love you, if you let me, and we can love this baby together.”

“Are you even capable of love?” the woman asks.

“That’s for you to decide. But our baby will love you, unconditionally.”

The woman leans in and kisses the devil. Sinjin catches on after there are several seconds of silence in which the woman and the devil just stare at each other, and closes the curtain after the new ending resolves.

As soon as the curtain closes, she can hear an explosion of applause and Tori’s loud, whooping cheers. Jade grins. Cat regards her curiously. “Your play is even gayer with the new ending, Jade.”

“Yeah. I know,” Jade tells her.

She’s not ready to shout it from the rooftops yet. But she isn’t going to hide anymore, either. And if everyone thinks it’s a gay play, well then, the better off Jade will be.

As soon as Jade and Cat step out front, Tori launches herself at Jade and grabs her in a fierce hug. Jade hugs back. Like a lot of hugs, this one makes her feel vaguely claustrophobic, but also excited to the point that she feels twitchy.

“You were *amazing*,” Tori murmurs earnestly against her shoulder, squeezing harder.

The nervous feeling seems to reach capacity and Jade begins to extract herself from the hug.

“Thanks,” she smiles a little.

Tori looks at her and beams, and then seems to remember that Cat is there, too, and she launches herself at Cat, “You were such a sinister devil, Cat!” she gushes, “I totally believed you were evil and stuff, but I knew you had a good heart. You’re *Cat*. You always have a good heart!” she rambles.

“Thanks!” Cat responds happily, seeming completely unperturbed by Tori’s hyper energy.

Jade loves the chance to show off her work, but she doesn't like to talk about it much. She usually feels it should speak for itself. So when other people begin to look like they want to approach her and Cat, Jade decides she wants to make herself scarce. "I'm going backstage," she tells Cat.

"Oh, okay," Cat answers, turning to greet Andre, who is approaching.

Jade lets herself out a side door and gets outside to the parking lot without encountering a lot of people. She has a deal with a few people congratulating her and telling her they enjoyed the performance, but she's brusque enough that no one tries to make her stop and chat.

Once outside, she pulls out her phone to text Tori and tell her to come outside, but when she looks up, Tori is bounding across the parking lot toward her.

"Were you trying to get away from me?" Tori asks, practically dancing from foot to foot.

"No," Jade answers, "I just hate talking to the audience after a show." She watches Tori for a moment, then says, "What did you think?"

"I thought you didn't want to talk about it."

"That's because it doesn't matter to me what most people think. What you think does matter."

"Okay," Tori starts pacing thoughtfully, "I liked it. Your work is always good, you always do tragedy and despair really well. And you did the unexpected with the deal with the devil. We all expect that not to work." She grins. "It was about finding love in unexpected places, huh?"

"I guess," Jade answers. She realizes that Tori is right. She had mostly changed the ending because it didn't feel right for it to be sad.

People are starting to come out of the school, so Jade says, "Ready to go?"

"I got a ride with Andre."

"Text him. I'll take you home later."

"Later? What are we going to do now?"

"You'll see."

Tori is far too excited about riding in the car with Jade to be paying attention, it seems. She's playing with the open window, making her hand ride the air waves. Once, she even sticks her head out, and dissolves into laughter for a good minute at Jade's incredulous expression.

So when they pull up to Shadow Creek Park, it's somehow a surprise to her, and she turns to Jade with her mouth hanging open. "The park?" she asks, "You took me to the park?"

Jade shrugs, "It's what we wanted to do with our evening, right? Originally, I mean."

"Yeah, but...in case you haven't noticed, I took wolfsbane."

"Oh, I noticed," Jade rolls her eyes, "But still. It's a place you can run around. Have some fun."

“*Jade*,” Tori launches herself across the center console and kisses her. Jade kisses her back fervently, until Tori starts trying to climb across and onto her.

“Whoa,” Jade laughs, “There’s not enough room. Come on. Let’s work off some of your excess energy.”

She gets out and opens her trunk, and sure enough, there’s the Frisbee that Robbie had made to promote Tinkle-Aid that Beck had left in Jade’s car and forgotten about. She pulls it out and waves it at Tori, who looks immediately excited.

Jade lets Tori run out into the park a bit and then throws the Frisbee. It seems to be a straight shot until it gets close to Tori and then starts veering away. Tori leaps to catch it and then starts running to bring it back to Jade, who takes it, baffled. Tori sprints away, looking over her shoulder to see when Jade might throw it again. Jade laughs, “You could toss it back!” she calls, throwing the Frisbee after Tori.

“But that hardly takes any energy!” Tori calls back, leaping again to catch Jade’s wayward toss. She runs it back again. After several more of the same tosses, Tori pants, “This is pretty degrading, actually!”

“It wouldn’t be if you would throw it back like a normal person!”

“That’s not nearly as fun!”

They throw and catch the Frisbee until Tori appears to actually get tired, and when she brings back the Frisbee, Jade draws her close and hugs her for a moment, then they walk back to the car together.

In the backseat, Tori seems to doze for a moment, nestled against Jade’s shoulder. Jade lets her, but after several minutes asks, “Can I tell you something?”

“Hmm? Sure,” Tori blinks her eyes open and focuses on Jade.

“I changed the ending to my play.”

“Oh yeah? Why?”

Jade shrugs, “The first ending was...sad. The devil was going to take the baby away and inform the woman that no other creature would love her as unconditionally as her firstborn. The woman would be as distraught as before.”

“That’s...awful. Clever, I guess, but so sad.”

“Yeah,” Jade says quietly.

“Why’d you change it?”

“Well. Because you were in the audience.”

“You...changed it because of me?”

“It didn’t feel right anymore.” Jade sighs, “I’m not going to become all sunshine and rainbows because I’m happy with you. I still think life is largely short and tragic and pointless. But the play

wasn't saying what I wanted it to anymore. Because, I don't know. Maybe I wanted to say something about new beginnings, and taking chances. Maybe I just wanted to write a gay play about two women trying to make it work."

Tori laughs, "That's the weirdest assessment of that play I think I can imagine."

Jade chuckles, "Heh. Yeah. But I knew you wouldn't like the first version, because you like stories with some optimism. So I gave you that."

"You changed it for me," Tori says again, grinning and nuzzling Jade's shoulder again.

"Yeah, well. Don't get used to it. This might be the only optimistic story I have in me."

"Good thing I don't want you to change." She lifts her head to look at Jade, "I would've liked the first version just fine. You're a great storyteller. Of course, I like the new version better, but you never have to worry about me disliking what you have to say in your work. I don't have to always agree to see the merit."

Jade smiles.

They cuddle and kiss in the backseat until almost midnight. Jade drops Tori off at her house, and heads back to her own house, the feeling of optimism lingering.

Full

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

It's Beck who first figures out that something is going on, a week or so into Jade and Tori dating. He approaches Jade quietly, and she is honest with him, because she has no reason not to be. He nods, tells her he's not surprised that she's queer, and she fumes at him a little for that. But in the end they laugh together.

Andre realizes it soon after. Tori tells Jade about their conversation, about how he totally *knew* she was into Jade, too, back when they sang that song together. Jade is keenly interested to know if Tori was, in fact, interested in her back then.

"I mean, yes, but no," Tori tells her.

"What on earth does that mean?"

"I was, but I wasn't ready to deal with it. In a weird way, watching Andre's heartache helped me realize what was going on with me." She smiles wistfully, "So, maybe I sang that song for you, a little. But didn't you sing a song for me, too?"

"What do you mean?"

"That song you sang right before you and Beck got back together. I could have sworn it was for me. You were looking at me the whole time. I'd heard you practice it so many times at school, but it was only then that it really hit me what it meant."

Jade's mind races. She knows exactly what song Tori meant, the one at the last Full Moon Jam.

"You must've been on too much wolfsbane," she says, "It was for Beck. What I wished Beck and I could be. I *did* wonder how you knew it well enough to sing along, though...you heard me at school?"

"You *were* looking at me!" Tori shouts triumphantly. Jade rolls her eyes, but privately concedes that maybe she was. Now that she thinks about it, that song fit the kind of passion she and Tori always had together far better than it fit the comfortable ease of her and Beck. "And I heard you because, well, you know. I couldn't help it. It was catchy, I would tune in whenever I'd hear you practicing in the student lounge or wherever."

"Stalker," Jade teases.

Jade figures Cat might never figure out what's going on, so a few weeks in, she decides to just tell her. At first, Cat seems surprised. "Is that why you kissed me during the play?"

"What? Cat, no."

"No no! I know that just because you are into girls doesn't mean you like me. But...that play was *really* gay. Were you just trying to come out?"

"I guess," Jade shrugs, "But I figured I should tell you."

“This is *awesome*,” Cat gushes, “I’ve always thought you two would be the best parents.”

“Uh, no one is pregnant, Cat.”

“Yeah, *yet*,” Cat winks. Jade rolls her eyes. She doesn’t exactly want to get into a biology lesson with Cat.

Robbie remains hilariously oblivious for almost three weeks, until one day when he tries to follow Tori and Jade into the janitor’s closet, because he misses the fact that the conversation they’d been having is over. But Beck grabs his shoulder and stops him.

In the closet, Jade leans in to kiss Tori, but she stops her with a finger to the lips. Then she giggles into Jade’s shoulder, “Beck is trying to subtly tell Robbie that we’re dating but he just doesn’t get it.”

Jade strains to hear, but she can’t. Tori keeps giggling, until about thirty seconds later, they hear a loud, “*What?!*” from Robbie.

They collapse into laughter and walk back out to take in Robbie’s shocked expression, their makeout session postponed to watch Beck awkwardly run his hands through his hair while Robbie stares in shock at them, waiting for the punchline.

In spite of his shock, Robbie is, of course, okay with this development. He tells them it’s a relief to know he never had a chance with either of them, anyway. They’re too polite to tell them they both like guys, too (though neither has really labeled herself), just never him.

They’ve spent plenty of time together as humans, and Tori being a werewolf doesn’t come up much over the next month. This seems to ease Tori’s fear that Jade might not see her as an actual person, but Jade is watching for the next full moon to come around, because as sad as it is that they can’t make out, there’s something immensely comforting about cuddling with a fluffy wolf.

And things have been heating up a bit. As scary as intimacy with a woman seemed at first, now Jade can’t get enough of it. What they’re doing is still pretty tame, mostly just touching each other’s breasts, but taking things further is definitely on Jade’s mind.

“What’s sex like as a werewolf?” she asks one day.

Tori’s whole body stiffens uncomfortably, “Um, what do you mean?”

“Shit. I didn’t mean it in the...bestiality sense.”

“Well, how else did you mean it? I mean, not that I can really answer, because I haven’t been with anyone, as a human or a wolf.”

“Ah. Right.” Jade had forgotten that part. Tori had only had a few boyfriends, mostly short term, and had never gone that far with any of them. “I just mean like...anatomy and um...like...I don’t know.”

“...Anatomy?” Tori asks, clearly baffled.

“I’ve just read some things, alright? Fine. Let’s just say I Googled werewolf sex.” Tori snorts, but her amusement shifts to discomfort quickly as Jade continues, “And I found some really weird stuff. Is the were-penis real?”

“*What?!*” Tori asks, horrified.

“Some people were talking a lot about it.”

“Oh my god. Jade, no. It’s not real. I have normal female parts. At least, I think they’re pretty normal.”

“Okay. I mean, I would have been fine either way.”

“You are twisted.”

“I’m just being honest. I like *you*, not your parts. Because I haven’t met those yet.”

“Well, hopefully someday soon, you’ll meet them and like them,” Tori says, trying to sound breezy, but Jade can sense the awkward edge to her tone.

A few days later, Jade is over on the first night of the full moon. They’re making out on Tori’s bed, the TV basically forgotten.

“Take this off,” Tori demands, plucking at the tank top Jade is wearing. Jade sits up to comply as Tori eagerly helps her pull it off. Jade sinks back against Tori’s pillows and watches Tori’s face with pleasure, watches the way her eyes fall to Jade’s breasts and her mouth parts eagerly.

“Holy mother of...” Tori trails off, then reverently moves a hand to lightly palm one breast. Jade just smirks. It feels nice, but watching Tori become absolutely mesmerized by them feels far nicer.

“You’re obsessed,” she tells her.

“I am. They’re the most perfect breasts and I get to touch them.”

“You’re touching my bra,” Jade points out.

There’s a pause. “Good point,” Tori says, and Jade sits up to let Tori remove her bra.

Tori’s expression is even more delicious now that she’s faced with Jade’s bare chest. It verges on worshipful, to the point that it almost makes Jade self-conscious. But before the staring can go on too long, Tori’s head dips down to press a line of kisses all along one breast.

This makes Jade squirmy and breathless, and that isn’t fair. “Hey,” she says sharply. Tori lifts her head quickly, like a scolded puppy, and Jade softens her tone, “Before you go any further...I’m going to need you to remove your shirt.”

Tori laughs softly in relief, and sits back, pulling her t-shirt over her head. Jade sits up, too, to reach around Tori’s body for her bra clasp, before Tori can just dive back down and attack her breasts.

Tori watches her as the bra falls away. Her breasts are round and pert, her skin soft, her hair is wild, her eyes are dark and luminous. She’s so gorgeous, Jade doesn’t even know how to tell her, doesn’t even have the proper words. So she kisses her forehead, her face, her mouth, and trails down her neck to her breasts. Tori grabs Jade’s hair and exhales shakily as Jade flicks her tongue over one nipple.

“God, you’re so...” Tori groans.

“So what?” Jade asks between movements of her tongue.

Tori brushes the hair away from Jade’s face and watches her for a moment. “So pretty,” she breathes. Somehow, it makes Jade blush.

None of this is really new, but it doesn’t make it any less exciting to be topless in front of each other. Before too long, Tori has Jade on her back again, and they are kissing heatedly, hands wandering all over the exposed flesh. Jade is hot and breathless and undeniably aroused.

A violent shudder passes over Tori’s body. Jade doesn’t think anything of it until Tori shoots upright.

“*Damn* it,” Tori mutters in a low voice, casting a frustrated look at Jade, eyes dipping down to take in her bare breasts. “I’ll be back,” Tori says, leaping off the bed in just her jeans and running into the bathroom.

“*Fuck*,” Jade mutters under her breath as she falls back onto Tori’s pillows. She can feel her pulse all over her body, but especially between her legs. Not that she was expecting to go that far tonight, but...cock blocked by the full moon. She supposes she’ll have to get used to it.

She closes her eyes and tries to calm down, figuring she’ll throw a shirt back on when Tori scratches to come out of the bathroom.

Her eyes fly open when the bathroom door swings open. Tori emerges, fully human.

“What?” Jade asks stupidly.

“Wolfsbane,” Tori responds, staring at her hungrily. For a moment, Jade feels less like an object of sexual desire and more like prey.

Then, Tori launches herself back to the bed and clambers on top of Jade. Jade grabs her and kisses her with just as much fervor, her arousal roaring back to full strength with a passionate, intense Tori Vega on top of her.

When Tori’s thigh presses between her legs, at first, Jade thinks it’s an accident. She stays still, almost hoping that the happy accident happens again, and it does, with more force. She rips her mouth away from Tori’s neck to gasp, “What are you...?”

“Is it okay?” Tori asks, nipping at her ear.

“Yeah,” Jade swallows hard, “It’s definitely okay.”

“Then help me out here,” Tori grunts, shifting position. Jade raises her own thigh to give Tori some stability, and Tori’s eyes nearly roll back into her head when Jade’s thigh makes contact between her legs. “Holy shit,” she breathes.

Jade smirks. It’s always a rush to get Tori to swear in the moment. “Yeah?” she asks.

“Yeah,” Tori answers, and then their mouths connect, and Tori’s hips begin to build a rhythm between them that Jade tries to match.

Tori rocks against her, mouth and hands all over her, and all Jade feels is the pressure building between her legs, through the layers of their jeans and panties. She runs her nails down Tori's back, eliciting what sounds almost like a growl, and she can feel every lean muscle she possesses. She rests her hands on Tori's hips, helping to guide her movements, but honestly, she feels like it isn't going to take much.

Tori's hand plays with one of Jade's breasts, while her mouth teases the other. Her hair is a mess, so Jade moves one hand up to brush the hair out of her face. Tori's eyes open and lock with Jade's for a moment, and reflexively, Jade tugs Tori's hair, gently but steadily.

Tori's eyes roll back in her head, and the movements of her hips are abruptly spasmodic, and just before it really starts, Jade realizes what's about to happen.

Tori moans, her back arches and she hips buck as she comes. Jade keeps her thigh steady as Tori moves against it jerkily, making breathless little cries. Finally, she slumps over onto Jade's chest, steadying herself with a firm hand on Jade's shoulder.

Jade is speechless as she takes it all in, and luckily, Tori recovers quickly, lifting herself and resuming the movement of her thigh between Jade's legs. She doesn't look like she can verbalize a response either, and her face is flushed and hungry as she watches Jade.

Jade feels like she's been close for ages, but after watching that, it really isn't long at all before she feels her thighs tightening around Tori's, feels the sensation build in her belly, and her eyes fall closed as she comes, as Tori watches gasping in time with Jade's moans.

"Wow," Tori is the first to say something after Jade comes down from her orgasm, still shaking a little from the aftermath.

"Yeah," is all she can say as she draws Tori close to her.

"I...wasn't sure that was going to happen tonight, but I'm glad it did," Tori says softly.

"Me, too. God, you were beautiful."

"*Were?*" Tori asks.

"Are," Jade concedes, kissing her.

"That's what I thought," Tori smirks.

The next night, they plan a little better, and finish their dry-humping session before Tori has to change form. Something about the full moon seems to give Tori a higher libido to match her high energy, not that Jade is complaining.

While they're cuddling in a post-orgasmic haze, Tori's body undulates involuntarily, and she sighs and gets up out of bed. "I guess I better change."

"Wait," Jade asks. Tori turns to look at her curiously. "Can I...watch?"

"Why?" Tori asks, horrified.

“Because I’ve basically watched you turn back and it didn’t bother me. And I’m curious.”

Tori stares inscrutably for a long moment and her expression turns wry. “If you just want to see me naked, you don’t have to use a ruse.”

Jade blushes. She’d nearly forgotten about that part. “That...might be part of the draw. But I want to see. To prove to you that this doesn’t freak me out.”

Tori stands in the middle of the room, indecisive, for a long moment. A shudder passes over her, and she turns to face Jade fully, and begins to remove her jeans.

Jade watches, keenly aware that she’s about to see Tori fully naked, clearly this time, and it isn’t going to be a remotely sexual thing. But she *is* curious, of course.

As Tori kicks off her panties and stands, naked, in front of her, Jade takes in her lean, lithe form, long-legged and gracefully curvy. Tori doesn’t even cross her arms, just stands, nude and waiting.

Her body shudders again, and her skin looks like it’s darkening, like a blush that starts at her spine and covers her whole body. Her legs seem to be getting shorter, and she starts to bend over. Her chin drops toward her chest.

All at once, fur blossoms over her body, as she bends further and further over until her hands rest comfortably on the floor. Jade hears the bones of her limbs crack into place, and watches as her spine seems to lengthen into a growing, fluffy tail. Then, her jaw seems to pop forward as a short muzzle develops, her forehead shrinks, and her ears seem to slide up her head and lengthen. Her eyes get rounder, more luminous, as her body slowly adjusts into a full wolf shape.

The whole process takes less than a minute, and afterwards, Tori looks herself over carefully, as if making sure the transformation is complete.

“Whoa,” Jade says, completely in awe. Tori stares at her uncertainly, and she reaches out to embrace her in an awkward hug. “You’re amazing,” she tells her, “Even when you look like a completely freak. And also as a wolf.”

Tori growls shortly in response, but then butts her head against Jade’s in a nuzzle.

They cuddle and watch TV for awhile, until Jade has to go home because it’s a school night.

“You know,” she says at the door, “I think we’re going to have the best summer ever.”

Tori’s ears perk up and she pants happily.

Maybe that feeling of optimism is going to last awhile.



Chapter End Notes

Fanart courtesy of the wonderfully talented tsunami-socks on Tumblr!

End Notes

Title from Purity Ring, "Begin Again."

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